

Towards a Society based on Mutual Aid, Voluntary Cooperation & the Liberation of Desire

#44/Fall-Winter '97-8
Vol.15, No.2

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Anarchy

A Journal of Desire Armed

Raoul Vaneigem

The Unitary Triad: Self-Realization,
Communication, Participation

Len Bracken

Guy Debord in Paris, '68:
The Situationist Years

John Zerzan

New York, New York:
20 Years since the '77 Blackout

Paul Z. Simons

A New Postscript to
John Zerzan's *Elements of Refusal*



Collage: Phillip Lollar



Whatever You Do— Get Away with It



What should anarchists be doing?

Those who *want* to spend time and energy advancing anarchic knowledge, values and goals might first do well to *question* just about everything they take for granted about anarchy and anarchism past and present. Many, if not most, of the easy answers to questions about what is to be done have proven to be less than effective or even counterproductive. Now, with the ongoing collapse of the international left, and with it the disintegration of anarcho-leftism as well, it is long past time to reexamine the practical and conceptual roots of anarchist resistance and reconstruction. The abolition of illusions can free the way for creative activity.

However, this type of questioning requires the conscious cultivation of open-mindedness and an almost systematic skepticism. While these qualities aren't entirely absent within the anarchist milieu, they aren't as widespread as could be hoped in a radical milieu which overtly begins by challenging one of the biggest and most powerful of social myths—that of the necessity for the existence of the nation-state.

Here are some of the major areas where the type of questioning I have in mind needs to be pursued. Each of these areas has already had some share of critical re-investigation by anarchists and others in recent years. But much more remains to be done before a new, self-critical consensus is forged in each of these areas which will allow them to be integrated into a new whole, a clearer, more sensible and larger vision of anarchy than has generally been imagined within the historical anarchist movement.

(1) Capitalism, Wage-Labor, Commodity Exchange: The basic analysis of the modern economic juggernaut needs to be renewed. Without an understanding of the structure of economic relationships within the worldwide system of capitalism, anarchist dreams will remain impotent. This will include new assaults on the ideologies of Work and Consumption. A world without "workers" and "consumers" must be imagined, without illusions about co-operatives, self-management or workers' control being any sort of genuine alternative *within* capitalist economies. Too many anarchists have yet to reach this understanding, especially the oxymoronic "anarcho-capitalists" and "libertarian capitalists," but also leftist anarchists whose goals are usually limited to self-contradictory versions of anarcho-social democracy or anarcho-syndicalism.



(2) Leftism, Unions, Identity Politics, Single-Issue Politics: The critique of the left as the left-wing of capital, while widespread within anarchist circles, probably remains a minority critique. The critique of unions and syndicalism may be a bit more prevalent, but still needs to be pressed. While the related critique of organizationalism *per se* (and compulsory roles) has barely been started. Identity politics has made inroads within the anarchist milieu which are too rarely criticized. The predominant extent to which multiculturalism serves as a capitalist marketing strategy is not appreciated by most anarchists. Identity politics and single-issue groups have made some definite contributions to the anarchist milieu (especially feminism and ecology), but their ultimate value will require shedding misguided attempts to subsume the more basic anarchist critiques of alienation and hierarchical power under their own narrower, ideological agendas.

(3) Ideology, Religion, Mass Media, Spectacle: The critique of the mass organization and mobilization of people around abstract ideals, images and projections has always been a fertile area for anarchist practice. However, this practice has usually been limited to partial critiques of particular ideologies or classes of ideologies and religions. The next step demands the development of an understanding of the complicity of all ideology and religion (including *anarchism* and primitive religions) in the maintenance of social alienation. The mass media is the primary modern purveyor of ideological, religious and spectacular consciousness, however educational institutions, churches, political and professional organizations, and the arts remain strong contributors. While pseudo-radical ideologies (leftism, environmentalism, reformist feminism, etc.) need more powerful challenges to their continuing efforts to recuperate the social discontent that they so successfully channel back into support for capital and state.

(4) Technology, Industrial Production, Professionalization, Economic Development: The anarchist critiques of technology and industrialism have been historically sporadic as more and more radicals were all too easily seduced—convinced to ignore their misgivings and confer their uncritical assent—by the ideologies of technological progress and industrial development. Technology and industrial production are never, as the pervasive myth portrays, just neutral tools amenable to control from below for human goals as easily as from above. As this has become clearer there is less and less excuse for anarchists to resist fundamental questioning of the roles technology and industrial production play in the

maintenance of capitalism and social hierarchy. Currently, the process of industrialization is consolidating its colonization of the human world on three major fronts: in the relatively intangible sphere of human health, consciousness and culture through their professionalization and commoditization, in the growth industries of biological and information technologies, and the formerly overlooked margins of the "Third World" through continuing international "development" strategies.

(5) Civilization, Progress, Science, Enlightenment Rationalism: If the process of civilization is conceived as consonant with the self-domestication of humanity, it is clear that the roots of social alienation and hierarchy remain much deeper than analyses trapped within the assumptions of the modern era. A convincing critique of civilization remains to be developed, though a beginning has been made in the last twenty years, and traditions of resistance have been maintained in many non-industrialized societies from which we can learn much. Although Enlightenment rationalism has made highly important contributions to human knowledge, it is also a major component of modern social alienation. The fetishization of technological and industrial progress as well as scientific reductionism find their ultimate fulfillment in

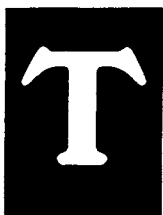
ideologies of historical progress and an autonomous science which stem from Enlightenment rationalism. A major goal of radicals in the coming years will be a convincing critique of civilization and the Enlightenment rationalism in which we find ourselves immersed that preserves what is of value in these turns.

Individual anarchists will continue to follow their own instincts and whims regarding what to read, how seriously to investigate different areas, and where to press their criticisms and practice. The general eclipse of genuine radicalism since the 1940s and '50s, with the brief exception of the '60s, has had two major effects. It has cut us off from recent traditions of resistance from which we still have much to learn. But it has also diminished the hold of even the most tenacious mistakes of those traditions, allowing us a relative freedom to reexamine previous eras and marginal movements for clues to what is wrong with society and where we might still have a chance to go. Let's use that freedom wisely.

-Jason McQuinn

This essay was originally written for a symposium appearing in the new issue of *Social Anarchism*, and will be the first of a new series of editorials to appear in this magazine.

He Means It. Do You?



oday opposition is anarchist or it is non-existent. This is the barest minimum coherence in the struggle against an engulfing totality.

And while ten years ago the milieu generally called anti-authoritarian was largely syndicalist, those leftist residues are fading out altogether.

Very few now find a vista of work and production at all liberatory.

As the smell of this false and rotting order rises to the heavens, registering an unprecedented toll on all living beings, faith in the whole modern world evaporates. Industrialism and its ensemble looks like it has been a very bad idea, sort of a wrong turn begun still earlier. Civilization itself, with its logic of domestication and destruction, seems untenable.

After all, is there anyone who is happy in this desolation?

Lovely new indicators of how it is panning out include increasing self-mutilation among the young and murder of children by their own parents. Somehow a society that is steadily more impersonal, cynical, de-skilled, boring, artificial, depressing, suicide-prompting, used up, drug-ridden, ugly, anxiety-causing and futureless brings a questioning as to why it has come to this/what's it all about?

Leftism and its superficial program is nearly extinct. Its adherents have folded their tents of manipulation and, in some cases, moved on to far more interesting adventures.

Anarchism, if not yet anarchy, is the only scene going, even if the blackout on the subject is still in effect. As if to match

the accelerating decomposition of society and displacement of life at large, determined resistance is also metamorphosing with some rapidity. The rout of the left, following the swiftly declining prestige of History, Progress and techno--salvation, is only one development. The old militants, with their ethic of sacrifice and order, their commitment to economy and exchange, are already fixed on the museum shelves of partial revolt.

Enter the Unabomber and a new line is being drawn. This time the bohemian schiz-fluxers, Green yuppies, hobbyist anarcho-journalists, condescending organizers of the poor, hip nihilo-aesthetes and all the other "anarchists" who thought their pretentious pastimes would go unchallenged indefinitely—well, it's time to pick which side you're on. It may be that here also is a Rubicon from which there will be no turning back.

Some, no doubt, would prefer to wait for a perfect victim. Many would like to unlearn what they know of the invasive and unchallenged violence generated everywhere by the prevailing order—in order to condemn the Unabomber's counter-terror.

But here is the man and the challenge before us.

Anarchists! One more effort if you would be enemies of this long nightmare!

Think for yourself. Act on your own.

-John Zerzan

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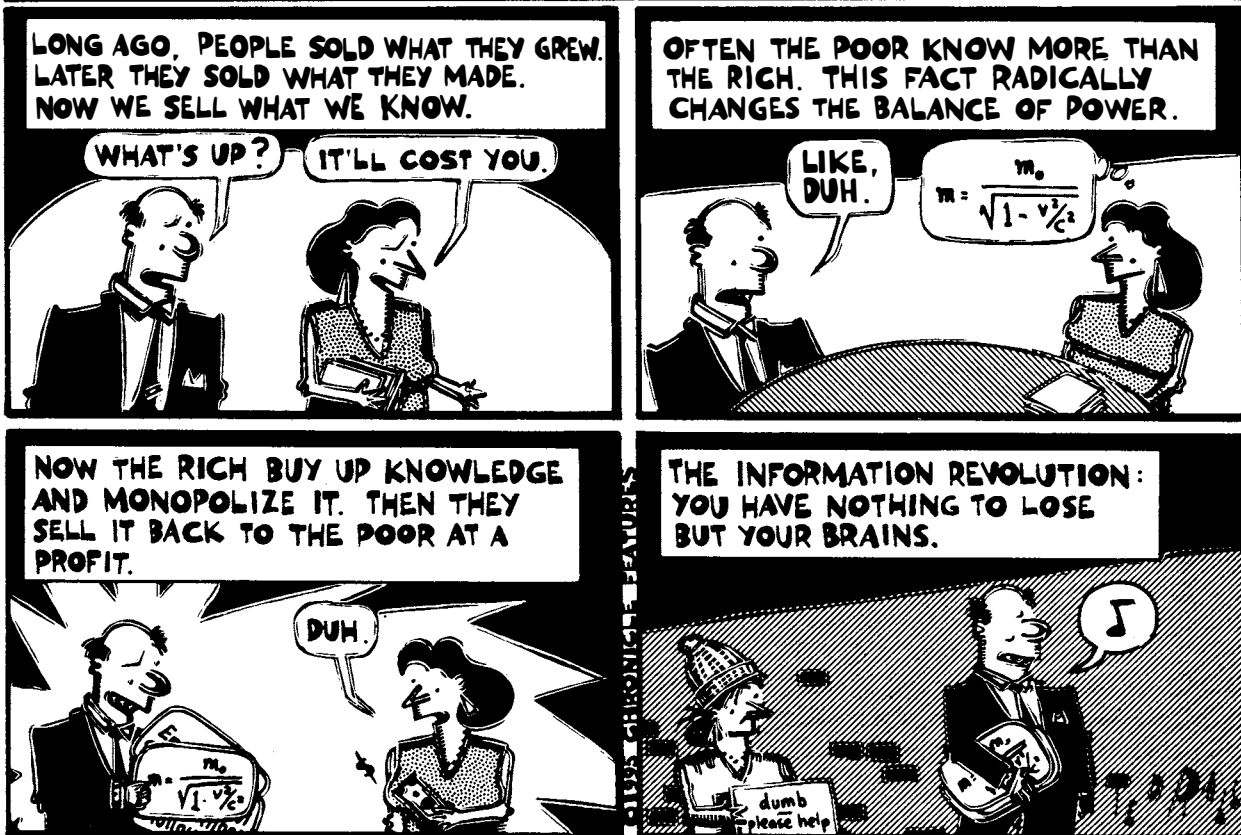
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Short news and comment articles or reviews which are used in "Openers," "The Sad Truth," "Alternative Media Review" or "International Anarchist News" may be edited for brevity and style. Other submissions (features, fiction) will be significantly edited only with the author's permission. **Anarchy** editors reserve the power to make editorial comments, to run introductions or responses, to classify articles, and to place sidebars wherever deemed appropriate. Until we can afford to remunerate authors, photographers, and graphic artists for their published contributions we will give free issues &/or subscriptions, or other appropriate tokens of our appreciation.

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INFORMATION MACHT FREI!



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"The whirligig of time has its revenges."
--B.A.G. Fuller

Inside Anarchy

Anarchy magazine is back once again in its old format! And thanks to the support of Boog Highbarger, formerly of *The Gentle Anarchist*, subscriptions are now available again as well (see the next page) from a new fulfillment address: C.A.L., POB 1313, Lawrence, KS 66044. *Anarchy* is guaranteed to appear at least two times per year in the immediate future. But we are actively looking for another new home, and hope to eventually return to a quarterly schedule.

The biggest fiscal news for *Anarchy* is that our largest distributor, Fine Print, declared Chapter 11 bankruptcy shortly after the last issue went to press in March. The immanence of this declaration was one of the major reasons why *Anarchy* had to return to C.A.L. Press here in Missouri to continue in print. Despite the best efforts of the New York B.A.L. Press collective organized by Tad Kepley, B.A.L.'s inefficiency and poor organization, along with the impending loss of \$2,400 due to the bankruptcy and the chronic instabilities of Tad's personal life, made it impossible for *Anarchy* to continue without intensive resuscitation by C.A.L.

It would be nice, of course, if *Anarchy* magazine could be published and distributed freely. However, we haven't yet found sources willing to donate paper, printing, shipping and postage, not to mention phone lines, computer equipment, office supplies, etc. So, unsurprisingly, we remain completely dependent upon newsstand sales and subscriptions to finance this magazine. However, due to the special circumstances presented by the bankruptcy and reorganization of our major distributor, we are making an appeal for extra support from anyone who believes that *Anarchy* fulfills an important role both within the anarchist milieu and without—since each issue of *Anarchy* is probably encountered and read by many more neophytes than any other North American anarchist periodical—due to its distribution and display in roughly 1,000 locations across the continent.

Please consider any extra support you can give. Order a copy of the brand new C.A.L. Press book, *Anarchy after Leftism* (see the offer on this page). Check out the other important books and the new *Anarchy* T-shirt available on page 82 of this issue. Order any back issues you've missed, or

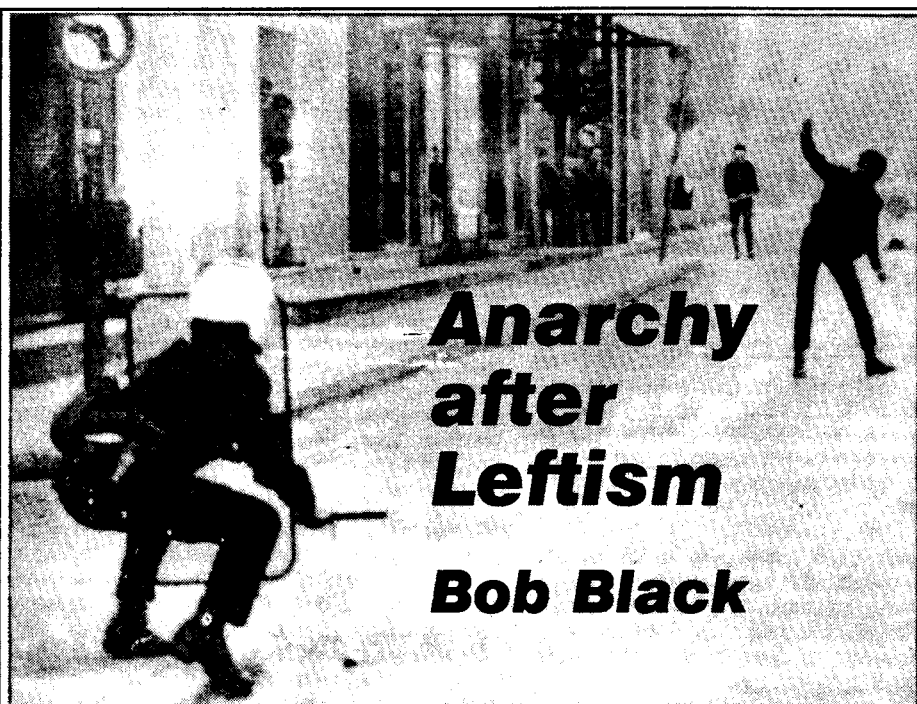
even a complete set of back issues still in print (#8 through #43 for a special price of only \$60), on page 83. Subscribe if you'd like. Consider becoming a sustaining contributor by donating \$120/4 issues. Or just send us a one-time donation to help reestablish this project on a more solid basis. The success of this magazine depends as much upon its readers as upon those who write, illustrate, edit and produce it!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Tad Kepley and the New York collective of B.A.L. Press for taking on the project of publishing this magazine over the last couple of years. Those who aren't publishers themselves will probably not realize just how much of a commitment in time, energy and money it can take to keep a project like this running smoothly. Unfortunately, B.A.L. was only able to publish two issues from New York over a period of

more than two years—and then only with substantial help from C.A.L. However, any previous delays in subscriptions should have been corrected as of the appearance of this issue and the inauguration of the new subscription service in Kansas. (B.A.L. was responsible for servicing all subscriptions up to and including issue #43.)

Despite the wishes of all those who would like to see the statist and capitalist cons carry on without substantial criticism, *Anarchy* will persevere in publishing as long as it receives enough continuing support from readers. There is no inherent reason that a magazine like this can't reach many more people than it already does. With some effort a circulation of 10,000 could be an achievable short-term goal. And a potential circulation of 15,000 or even 20,000 shouldn't be out of the question with your help!

-Jason McQuinn, Editor



"Cleansed of its leftist residues, anarchy—anarchism minus Marxism—will be free to get better at being what it is."

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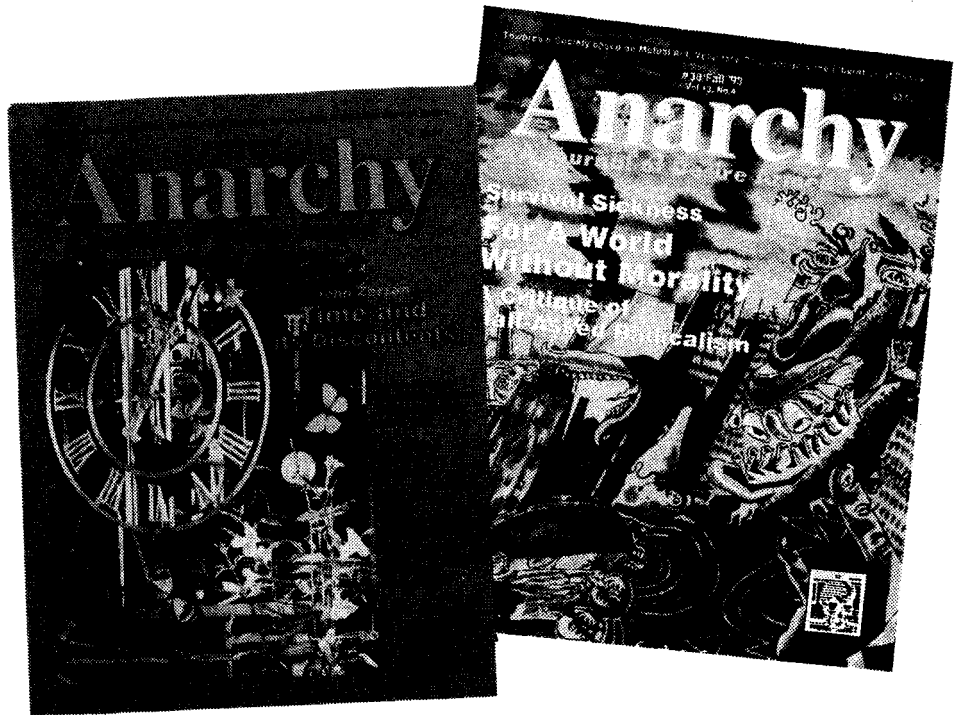
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Tired of being told what to do, how to feel, and how to think?
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Anarchy is home to the most challenging, creative, vibrant and critical strains of anti-authoritarian thought extant today. We take no shit and don't think you should have to either. Right now you can subscribe for \$12 and it'll get you four fat issues of the most provocative, confrontational discourse around.

We publish a journal of *desire armed*. Neither left nor right, we're just uncompromisingly anti-authoritarian. *Anarchy* refuses *all* ideology. We criticize all religion, all spiritualism, all moralism, all political ideology. We refuse to bow before the altars of 'God' or the nation-state. We spit on nationalism, militarism, racism and hierarchy. We don't want to leave anything out. *Nothing* is sacred, least of all *anarchism*. We want to create a genuinely different alternative vision—radically cooperative and communitarian, ecological and feminist, spontaneous and wild—a liberatory vision free from the constraints of our own human self-domestication.



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#44

Hopefully, from this point on, *Anarchy* will once again begin exchanging with all other anarchist and genuinely radical periodicals. And we will continue to try to review those periodicals received in future issues. All reviews in this issue are by Jason McQuinn, except those marked [A.T.] for Alex Trotter or [L.J.] for Lawrence Jarach.

Publishers please note: To ensure that your publications are reviewed in future issues, send all zines and magazines to our reviewer address: C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA.

A-INFO5

No. 22, Aug.-Dec. 1996 (Postbus 61523, 2506 AM Den Haag, Netherlands) 16-page bulletin with news mostly from Europe. Fascist/antifascist activities, government drug policies, squatters, calendar of events. Small content. or trade. Spread it around. [AT]

THE ANARCHIST

Vol.1, #4 (POB 332, Albert St., North Quay, Brisbane 4002 Australia; e-mail: anarcho@byteback. pana.aug.au) Tabloid, 12 pages. Leave Uranium in the Ground, for the human species against ethnic and nationalist loyalties, Burma's opium wars, pot protests, anarcho-colonialism. No price listed. [AT]

ANARCHIST AGE WEEKLY REVIEW

#268/Sept. 22-28, '97 (POB 20, Parkville, Victoria 3052, Australia) is a neatly-produced little 4-page weekly bulletin summarizing Australian & international news for libertarians down under. This issue includes comments on the Australian Football League, news from the Philippines, and a review of José Pèirats' *Anarchists in the Spanish Revolution*. Subscriptions are \$50/50 issues or \$10/10 issues.

ANARCHIST AGE MONTHLY REVIEW

#77/May 1997 (POB 20, Parkville, Victoria 3052 Australia; e-mail: anarcho@geocities.com) 36 pages, from Down Under. Collection of Weekly Reviews. Australian conservatives in disarray, history of Aus. anarchism, East Timor refugees. Sub: AUS \$18/6 issues (or \$10 for "non-wage earners." [AT])

ANARCHIST INFORMATION BULLETIN ON GREECE

#5 thru #7 (A/Coil, c/o George Viassopoulos, POB 30658, Athens 10033 Greece) Chronicles of hell-raising in Hellas, each about 10 pages or so. No price listed. Send a trade or something. [AT]

A NEWS: INFORMATION BULLETIN FROM GREECE

#16/April-June 1997 (POB 30577, Athens 10033 Greece) "The social war goes on." 8 pages. No price listed. Send something (?). [AT]

BAD ATTITUDE

#8/Autumn-Winter '95 (121 Raiton Road, London SE24 0LR, U.K.) is an energetic, 24-page "Radical Women's Newspaper" in an oversized tabloid magazine format, featuring international

Anarchist press review

Compiled by Lawrence Jarach, J. McQuinn & Alex Trotter

news and opinion from an anti-porn, leftist-feminist perspective. Issue #8 includes a brief history of the (now quarter-century-old) U.S. women's news journals *Off Our Backs* by Angela Johnson, an interview with Vi Subversa (formerly of the anarcho-punk band Poison Girls), and an interview with Tracy Chandler (one of the authors of *Lesbians Talk Violent Relationships*) on abusive lesbian relationships in the U.K. Every issue always includes pages and pages of short women's news updates from around the world. Check this out! Subscriptions are £10/6 issues (IMO/checks in Sterling only).

BLIND AND LOST

(505 Paradise Rd., Box 213, Swampscott, MA 01907) Punky xeroxed zine, 26 pages, mostly taken up by a piece of short fiction called "Veritas" set in New York in the near future. No price listed. You can send in writings, photos, and artwork. [AT]

BREAKOUT

March 1997 (Soli-komitee Italien, c/o Infoladen, Breischstr. 12, 81667 München, Germany) "Information regarding anarchists in Italy and elsewhere"; more specifically, regarding anarchist prisoners. Includes contact addresses. Price: DM 3. [AT]

BULLETIN OF THE KATE SHARPLEY LIBRARY

#11/1997 (KSL, BM Hurricane, London WC1N 3XX, England) is an 8-page newsletter "dedicated to countering the distortion and lies that pass for the history of Anarchism" in order to "give the anarchist movement a true view of its origins." This issue provides information on a few unknown and little-known anarchists, including Jaime Balius (editor of the Friends of Durruti group's *El Amigo del Pueblo* in revolutionary Spain), Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri and others. There is good, solid historical information in each issue which can't be found anywhere else. Send a contribution for a sample copy.

COLLECTIVE ACTION NOTES

#13-14 [double issue]/1997 (POB 22962, Baltimore, MD 21203; email: cansv@igc.apc.org) is a sophisticated, often highly-interesting, 28-page tabloid covering debates and actions of interest to the anti-statist, anticapitalist (anarchist/ultra-left) workers' resistance in a very readable format. This issue includes several reports on the Liverpool dock-workers' strike, an assessment of "After the 1995 Strikes: The Current Situation in France," accounts of recent class struggle in Canada, and a debate with Kamunist Kranti (India) "On Organization" (in which KK comes off looking more human). In general, these pieces are of much more interest

than reading about the standard old & new leftist illusions concerning electoralism, social democracy, trade unions, nationalization, etc. still being produced by the remaining publications of the political left. Send \$7 or £7 for a 4-issue subscription.

COMMUNIST HEADACHE Notes for Working and Living

#4/Spring & #5/Autumn '96 (c/o Black Star, POB 446, Sheffield S1 1NY, England) *are the latest issues of this intensely serious yet witty 28-page zine. In the Spring issue the publisher provides something of a self-analysis while expressing his dissatisfactions with the radical libertarian milieu in England, and his attempts to make some headway in criticizing predominant perspectives like the workerism of the anarcho-syndicalists and the "waiting for the crisis" mentality of libertarian communists. He faces some of the same problems North American radicals face, and asks some of the same questions we should be asking ourselves. This issue also includes a brilliant little sketch framed around "Agent Fox Muldur" and his "X-Files" that deserves a much wider exposure. Issue #5 includes an interesting analysis of Charles Bukowski's critique of work in his novels *Post Office* and *Factotum*, unfortunately in excruciatingly small type. Send a contribution for a sample copy.

CONTRAFLOW

#22 (c/o 56a Infoshop, 56 Crampton St., London SE17, England; e-mail: contraflow-london@omega.comlink.de) "European counternetwork," tabloid, 4 large pages. Carnival of the Oppressed, Trausing New Labour, victory to the Bougainville revolutionary army, Swedish feminists assaulted by police, anti-roads, Spanish squatters arrested, lots of other news items. Free, but donations appreciated. [AT]

CRASH & BURN

#2/Spring 1997 (Leif Fredrickson, Maildrop 1818, 124 Raymond Ave., Poughkeepsie, NY 12604) Xeroxed zine, 16 pages, consisting of an essay entitled "Culturicide," concerning issues of alienation, culture vs. nature, and arbitrary vs. nonarbitrary games, plus commentary on the themes of the essay from the author himself and others. Welcomes letters, art, and essay contributions. Price: Two postage stamps. [AT]

DEMOCRACY & NATURE

#9 (1449 W. Littleton Blvd., Suite 200, Littleton, CO 80120) Journal formerly known as *Society and Nature*, 222 pages. Devoted to "economic democracy and green economics." This issue: environmental sustainability and trade, marxism and ecology, Murray Bookchin

resigns from the advisory board. Subscription: \$22/year U.S.A., \$28 Canada. [AT]

DISCUSSION BULLETIN

#82/Mar.-April thru #84/July-Aug.'97 (POB 1564, Grand Rapids, MI. 49501) is a 32-page assortment of letters and reprinted articles primarily from the anti-market, non-statist radical milieu. The March-April issue includes some rather charitable reviews of Murray Bookchin's scurrilous & poorly argued rant on *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism*, while the July-Aug. issue is notable for a reprint from *The Poor, the Bad, and the Angry* on the "Progress/ Anti-Progress Debate," as well as for editor Frank Girard's amazingly obtuse review of Bob Black's important new book (from C.A.L. Press), *Anarchy after Leftism*. Subscriptions are \$3/year (6 issues). [J.M.]

EARTH FIRST!

March-April 1997 (POB 1415, Eugene, OR 97440) Eponymous journal of the EF! movement, tabloid, 40 pages. This issue: the legacy of Judi Bari, army nerve gas, cloning, cleanup farce at Hanford, logging in Eastern Europe, Belize, and U.S.A., endangered species, cross-cultural organizing, luddism for today. Price: \$4 Canada, \$3.50 U.S./single issue; \$25/sub. [AT]

EARTH FIRST! ACTION UPDATE

#38/April '97 (Dept 29, 1 Newton St, Manchester M1 1HW England) 30pp. The anti-copyright journal of direct action environmentalists in the UK. Concise reports of various European eco-defenders' activities, with announcements of future demonstrations against road extensions, the building of runways, the dumping of nuclear waste, the incursions of genetic engineering, etc. Always includes small flyers and an international contact list. [L.J.]

FLAMING FLAG

#2-#4/undated (POB 102, Columbia, MO 65205) is a 12 to 18-page photocopied anarchist zine published by & far high-school-aged kids. The latest issue includes short pieces like "An Essay on Anarchism" by Ryan Peterson, the anonymous "Ideology of Atheism," and the second part of Diablot's "What is Anarchy?" Send a contribution for a sample copy.

FREEDOM

Anarchist Fortnightly

Vol.58, #16/Aug.16 thru #17/Sept.6, '97 (84b Whitechapel High Street, London E1 7QX, England) is a long-running 8-page tabloid of anarchist news and comment, primarily focussing on all things British, but also taking on international social struggles as well. Issue #16 includes anti-workfare pieces, and a long review of Brian Bamford's *The Tradition at Workers' Control: Selected Writings by Geoffrey Ostergaard*, along with a bizarre review of *Anarchy* magazine (giving almost no indication of the magazine's editorial perspective or contents, while complaining at length about the serial reprinting of Raoul Vaneigem's important *The Revolution of Everyday Life*). Subscriptions are £18.00/year (24 issues).

HEAD

#7/undated (BM Uplift, London WC1N 3XX, England) is an incredibly packed, unpaginated zine with a huge amount of information, reprints of subversive posters, calls to action, visionary comics, etc., from "unemployed heads who don't want to waste our lives in a dead end system." A lot more zines could use this level of quality in their signal to noise ratios. This one is "The Sex Issue," and it's loaded with information, tips and titillations like Jack Morin's "10 Rules of Anal Sex," an interview with Collin Brown on Body Electric—his school for erotic massage, a story of love without contracts titled "Love in the Boudoir," a quick interview with Hakim Bey, Steve Wilson's "Sexual Mysticism in Theory and Practice," and much, much more. See for yourself while they're still available. Sample copies are \$10 or £3.50 cash (postpaid).

THE HOLY BILE

#8/undated (515-916 West Broadway, Vancouver, B.C., V5Z 1K7, Canada) is an effective, humorous & healthy, (though often bilious, as advertised) dose of corrosive critique aimed at all the forces which keep people in ignorance, especially religion! This issue includes an editorial titled "The Deficit Diatribe: Exposing the Hoax," a great comic titled "Selling Yourself," Monserat Ravachol's amusing "The Cosmic Countdown Has Begun: UFO Cults and the End of the World," Mickey Z's take on a *New York Times* report of a typical Clinton speech, and comically astute commentaries in which "The Angry Little Man Translates the Bible" & "The Angry Little Man Reads between the Lines," along with an hilarious review by Eva Six of an old book titled *The Sex Lives of Famous People*. Check this one out! Sample copies are a great deal at \$2 postpaid. And there's also a Best-of compilation of selections from issues #1 thru #7 available for \$2.

INFINITE ONION

#14/Jan. 1997 (c/o T.M., POB 1032, Colorado Springs, CO 80901) Tabloid, 12 pages, with punk graphic style. Alternative economies, politics of theft, kids' power in Copenhagen, Berlin squat evictions, prisoner contacts. Send small contrib. [AT]

THE MATCH!

#91/Winter '96-97 (POB 3012, Tucson, AZ 85702) is an irregularly-published 92 to 116-page anarchist journal, lovingly self-printed by the always cantankerous editor/publisher Fred Woodworth. The articles in these issues continue to focus on the rampant abuses heaped upon innocent people by authoritarian institutions, especially by cops, courts and prisons. In issue #91 the editor spins his own unlikely (but still possible) theory on the whereabouts of former American Atheists organizational head Madalyn Murray O'Hair who mysteriously disappeared over a year ago with two other members of her family (he thinks they're being groomed by *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt as his successors). Every issue continues the very well-done serializations of Iris Lane's fiction "The Two Sisters," Kent Winslow's "Landmarks in the Desert,"

and Paul Roasberry's "Teaching Pigs to Whistle." Subscriptions are well worth the \$10/4 issues (cash preferred) if the often grouchy tone of this zine doesn't put you off.

NOT BORED!

#27/May 1997 (POB 1115, New York, NY 10009; e-mail: rose@thorn.net) Pro-situ fanzine, 60 pages. Material about recent and ongoing events in New York City, including NB's campaign against the MTA's metrocard, review of *October* magazine's special issue on the situationists, and translation of Debord and Wolman's "Why Lettrism," among others. No price listed. [AT]

PASSION BRIGADE NEWSLETTER Embracing the lesbian and gay freedom movement

#12 (LGFM BM Box 207 London WC1N 3XX England) 40p. A 36-page pamphlet size zine with no staples. News and views on topics relating to sex—lots of sex—in every possible combination of bodies, temperaments, and identities. It has a very non-moralistic tone, and is accepting of all perspectives, since they publish just about anything that members and supporters send them. Fantasies, poems, a report on a meeting attended by members of Class War, Lesbian and Gay Freedom Movement, Feminists Against Censorship and others and what they discussed, as well as media reviews are included. An interesting mix, but there is little explicitly anarchist in it that I could find; it seems that

the idea of consent is the meeting ground between anarchy and sexual liberation for the Passion Brigade, but this could just as easily be the meeting ground for sex-lib and the ACLU. Still, sex is a wonderful topic for discussion as it relates to things anarchic, and this zine is a nicely informal place for such a discussion to take place. [L.J.]

PROFANE EXISTENCE

#32/Summer 1997 (POB 8722, Minneapolis, MN 55408) Anarcho-punk magazine, 48 pages, newsprint. Solidarity with Chiapas rebels in Mexico, Chaos Days in Grmoney, scene report from Bulgaria, Belgian squatters, plus plenty of band reviews. \$2/single copy; \$12/sub (six issues). [AT]

SAMIZDAT ANONYMOUS

#1 (Black Bread Press, POB 500, Moscow 107061 Russia; e-mail: cube@glasnet.ru) Photocopied zine, 28 pages. Against work and technology, bashing Murray Bookchin, revolutionary aspects of proletarian shopping, boycotting the millennium, sex trainer for elite party women (this one hilarious). Some real trenchant stuff here, better than most little zines. Send gifts (not money) to help keep this project going. [AT]

SHITHAPPY

#4/undated (Adam Bregman, 11338 Joffre St., L.A., CA 90049) is another rollicking issue of this must-see 32-page zine. This time Adam Bregman checks in with "A Brief Guide to L.A.," an account of his summer vacation in

Israel & Europe, three steamy short stories, and more hilarious accounts of his costumed adventures in "Klowns! Klowns! Klowns! Klowns!" (see APR #3 for a sample of his clown madness). Send at least \$2 for a zine that may well brighten up your day!

TEMP SLAVE

#9/undated (POB 8284, Madison, WI 53708) is a sometimes thoughtful, sometimes mischievous, sometimes hilarious look at temp workers and the corporate slavers who employ them. In issue #9 publisher Keffo describes his experiences with his first job, going to college, his workaholic father's early death, and his recent temporary escape from work for six months in Ireland. Also included in this issue is a reprint of Tom Wheeler's excellent diatribe "Pissing on the Work Ethic," an interesting review of *Power and Greed: Inside the Teamsters Empire of Corruption*, and Keffo's hilarious rant about using the word "Fuck!" This zine is always worth a look, and this issue is probably the best ever! Send \$3 cash for a copy today, or \$8 for a 3-issue subscription before it's too late.

TERMINAL BOREDOM

(121 Railton Rd., Brixton SE24 London, England) Booklet, 10 pages, droning about the death culture of contemporary civilization. Illustrated with collages. In favor of Groucho Marxism and wimmin with wide thighs and round asses. Send a trade. [AT]

WAR CRIME

#6 (POB 2741, Tucson, AZ 85702) Newsprint zine, 46 pages, published by a guy who is "trying to encourage people to extend DIY ethics to all facets of their lives." EarthCulture updates, solidarity with the Zapatistas, how to make tempeh, what to do if federal investigators come knocking, plus reviews of punk rock bands. \$2/issue. Will take music or written materials for review. [AT]

WILLFUL DISOBEDIENCE

#4/May 1997 (Venomous Butterfly Publications, 828 Royal St. #605, New Orleans, LA 70016) Egoist and antiwork zine, 20 pages. A passionate appeal to steal from work, against fake "unity" among anarchists, technology as limit to human creativity, plus lots of short news items from the front in the war against authority. Send at least a couple stamps to cover postage. [AT]

ZAGINFLATCH

#9 (zap/ark, gajeva 55,10 000 Zagreb, Croatia) Newsletter of the Zagreb anarchist movement. Conscientious objectors in Croatia, protests in Serbia, anti-McDonald's, freedom of the press. No price listed, send a trade or contrib. [AT]

Non-English-language materials received

BUITEN DE ORDE

Winter '97 (c/o LAS Postbus 1610, 6501 BP Nijmegen, Netherlands) The quarterly organ of the Free Union (anarchosyndicalists) of the Netherlands. f4.50. In Dutch. [L.J.]

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CENTRE INTERNATIONAL DE RECHERCHES SUR L'ANARCHISME
Bulletin 53/March 1997 (Bibliothèque du C.I.R.A., avenue de Beaumont 24, CH-1012 Lausanne, Switzerland) Catalog of periodicals and new book acquisitions in various languages, predominantly French and Spanish. Sub: 10 FF/year. [AT]

CNT
Organ of the National Confederation of Labor

#222/May '97 (C/ Molinos, 64 18009 Granada, Spain) The monthly paper of the Spanish anarcho-sindicalist union. Lead article against the labor reform supported by the UGT (Socialist Party trade union) and the CCOO (the CP union). An article about Mujeres Libres, the anarchist women's organization active during the revolution of 1936. Announcement of the start of a libertarian video archive/library, beginning with "Land and Freedom" and "Manufacturing Consent". In Spanish Price: 200 pesetas/single issue; 5,000 ptas/12 issues (to the Americas). [L.J.]

DE NAR

#127/April & #128/May '97 (Postbus 104 B-1210 Brussel 21, Belgium) Almost monthly (ten times a year) Belgian magazine. Articles on feminism and anarchism, unions and work, Belgian fascists, technocracy, and the situationists. Also an events calendar. In Flemish. 70 Belgian francs. [L.J.]

EKINTZA ZUZENA

(Ediciones E.Z., Apdo. 235, 48080 Bilbao, Spain) 64-page magazine mostly in Spanish, with some articles in Basque. Antimilitarism, "neoruralism," reviews of anarcho-punk music. US \$25/four issues. [AT]

EL ACRATADOR

#57 & #58/May & June 1997 (Apdo. 3141, 50080 Zaragoza, Spain) "Bulletin of Antagonist Communication," 16 small pages, in Spanish. Lots of antifascist stuff, solidarity with Tupac Amaru, ecology, Basque situation. Subscription is 500 pesetas for 10 issues (no price given in U.S. currency). [AT]

IFA BULLETIN

Dec.'96 (145 rue Amelot 75011 Paris, France) An irregular zine of the International of Anarchist Federations, with reports from various affiliated groups in France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Norway. A short history of the IFA is included, plus articles about the suppression of the journal *Démarchie* in Quebec, the Russian war in Chechnia, the EZLN, and the A-Infos project. In English, French, Italian, Spanish, and a poem in Portuguese. No price listed. [L.J.]

LE LIBERTAIRE

#175/April 1997 (25 rue Dumé d'Aplemont 7600 Le Havre, France) Six large pages, in French. This issue: history of syndicalism, Makhno, surrealist cinema of Jan Svankmajer. Price: 9

FF/single issue; 100 FF/ten issues (international). [AT]

LIBERECANA LIGILO

#89/Winter '97 (67 av. Gambetta 75020 Paris, France) Jointly published in France and Brazil, this bulletin has an analysis of capitalism, the repression of Italian anarchists, a report on the 20th congress of the AIT. In Esperanto. [L.J.]

NAPEREKÖR

#6/Summer 1997 (POB 500, Moscow 107061, Russia) In Russian, 74 pages. "The angry issue" includes anarch news from around the world, articles on Albania, Belarus, and communitarian experiments in Italy, P. Ryabov's "Anarchist Letters," Direct Action Communiqué, a history of FORA, Laure A.'s "20 yrs. of Anarchy," interview with Katherine Rot, special fiction section. US \$5.00 or trade. [L.J.]

PERSPECTIEF

#46/Jan.-March 1997 (Francis Faes, Dracenastraat 21, B-9000 Gent, Belgium) Dutch-language anarchist journal, 60 pages. Articles on reformism, utopia, Kropotkin as scientist, Bob Black's "Abolition of Work" in translation. Price: 100 BF/single issue; 400 BF/four issues. [AT]

SCHWARZER FADEN

#59/Fall '96 (PF 1159 D-71117 Grafenau, Germany) A quarterly journal of lust and freedom from some German anarchists. A very slickly produced but

dry collection of essays, book reviews, and history. Included in this issue are articles about the awful working conditions of workers on a banana plantation in Costa Rica that's owned by a German baby food company, yet another translation of the EZLN program for electoral reform in Mexico (when will anarchists end their overly romantic honeymoon with them?), a discussion of international finance capital, and an obituary of Albert Meltzer. The most interesting looking article is on the history of anarchist youth in a German town from 1929-1945. In German. 8DM. [L.J.]

SIN DIOS

#2 (Rubisel c.c. a/p-398-54701, Cuautitlan Izcalli, Edo. de Mexico, Mexico) Punk zine in Spanish, 16 pages. Articles on vegetarianism, homosexuality, land and property, animal liberation. No price listed. Send trade. [AT]

SOLIDARIDAD OBRERO

Organ of the Regional Confederation of Labor of Catalunya

#270/March '97 (Via Augusta, 2 08911 Badalona, Spain) The monthly paper of the Catalan regional federation of the CNT. Articles concerning International Women's Day, the 20th congress of the AIT (anarcho-sindicalist international), a listing of lectures and places to hang out, plus an attack on the labor reform sponsored by the Socialist Party. In Spanish. 100 pesetas. [L.J.]

The Radicalism Handbook

Reviewed by Len Bracken

The Radicalism Handbook: A Complete Guide to the Radical Movement in the Twentieth Century by John Button (Cassell, London, England, 1996) 460pp. \$21.95 paper.

When I think back to my early twenties, when I was still groping for ideas that could account for the world in more realistic ways than the dominant paradigms, I recall the way I was drawn in many diverse directions. I didn't always have access to an adequate library, so a book such as Button's *Handbook* might've come in handy—the entries could've served as a brief reminder of a given thinker's line of thought or spurred more interest in a given movement. That said, the *Handbook* has serious limitations.

The bulk of the book isn't about "radicalism" so much as figures who are, more or less, radical—the biographical sketches of the poets, witches, priests, academics, mystics, politicians and peace activists, etc. who Button values for their radicalism. Every author is entitled to define his topic, but only an odd book on radicalism would include Christopher Lasch rather than, say, Joe Hill; Bertrand Russell rather than Anton Pannekoek; etc. These biographical sketches are only rarely critical, and

therefore give the impression of being under-informed. For example, nothing is said of Gloria Steinem's by now well known collaboration with the CIA, and Daniel Ortega's corruption is glossed over by means of an indirect reference to nepotism.

The global scope of the book, bringing together the likes of Wei Jingsheng, C.L.R. James and Bertolt Brecht, is without doubt the book's greatest attribute. But this scope makes many of the omissions all the more glaring. For example, the relatively small "Movements and Groups" section makes no mention of the legendary POUM in the Spanish Civil War that was so well depicted by Ken Loach in his film *Land and Freedom* and in Victor Alba's book on the movement. The discussion of May 1968 in Paris is altogether inadequate—it fails to mention Lefebvre, Castoriadis, Vaneigem, Debord (or any of the Situationists). No mention is made of the revolutionary events that took place in Yugoslavia or Portugal in the wake of 1968. Nor does an important economic theorist and protagonist in Italian radical politics such as Toni Negri merit mention in Button's book. Due to his theory and work with the American journal *Zero-work*, Negri is an international figure, as is his fellow Italian, Gianfranco Sanguinetti. A

member of the Situationist International, Sanguinetti was directly involved with radical worker groups in Italy, and his highly polemical books have been translated into numerous languages. Button seems to be unaware that Sanguinetti is the author of the most radical political hoax ever written and omits him from his *Handbook*.

Despite its disappointments, which include the predictable historical introduction, the *Handbook* is a welcome addition to one's bookshelf as a reference to all the remarkable people in this world who have fought for, and are still fighting for, radical change—from Steve Biko to Ito Noe to many more people I have never heard of before. As always when confronted with a major work such as this, I remind myself not to be overly critical until I have created something better myself. As far as I know, no reference like this *Handbook*, with its global perspective, exists—the only thing that comes close is Buhle and Georgaka's highly recommended *Encyclopedia of the American Left*, which is, as implied by its title, limited to the USA. Get *The Radicalism Handbook* and send entries of your favorite radical to the author for future editions, or better yet, write your own book. Better still, bring people together and stage a historical operation of your own and communicate the example. You might make a difference, even if you don't make Button's cut.

Break-out from the Crystal Palace

Reviewed by Alex Trotter

Break-out from the Crystal Palace, The Anarcho-Psychological Critique: Stirner, Nietzsche, Dostoyevsky by John Carroll (Routledge, London & Boston, 1974) 188pp. £4.50 hardcover.

This book, probably out of print, is an intriguing comparative study of these three important thinkers that also discusses how their ideas influenced and clashed with those of other titans such as Marx and Freud. Marx's famous attack on Stirner in *The German Ideology*, which occupies center stage in Carroll's study, is analyzed at length. The most important aspect of *Break-out...* is its recognition of the psychological dimension of anarchism beyond its more familiar appearance as political ideology.

Carroll starts by presenting what he calls "anarcho-psychology" as one of three principal intellectual traditions inherited from the nineteenth century, the other two being liberal-rationalism (British utilitarianism) and marxist socialism. The collectivist forms of political anarchism (e.g., Proudhon, Kropotkin) are viewed here as part of the socialist or "social-liberal" tradition. Fascism and conservatism are generally excluded from this study but are mentioned here and there *en passant*, mainly in relation to the Nazis' appropriation of Nietzsche.

Forerunners and influences, acknowledged or not, of Stirner, Nietzsche, and Dostoyevsky include Goethe, Fourier, William Blake, Hegel, Feuerbach, and (in Nietzsche's case) Schopenhauer.

The anarcho-psychological critique is divided into three elements: the critique of ideology; the critique of positivism, empiricism, and even knowledge itself (ontological anarchism); and the critique of economic man.

Stirner, even before Nietzsche, proclaimed the death of God. The attack on Christianity is

the primary target of his critique of ideology in *The Ego and His Own*. God is the supreme "fixed idea," but the abstraction of humanism as a substitute for God serves just as ill for independent thought and liberated emotions. Feuerbach, the principal theorist of the Young Hegelians, wrote in *The Essence of Christianity* (1841) that Man, in a crisis of identity, seeks an alter ego in God, which is but the alienated (the term *alienation* coming from Rousseau by way of Hegel) universal essence of Man. In this way theology becomes anthropology, a kind of religion of Humanity, in Feuerbach's philosophy. This metaphysical concept came under attack from two critics, both also from the milieu of the Young Hegelians—Marx (historical materialism) and Stirner (egoism/individualist psychology).

Stirner was not satisfied with the rationalist Voltairean critique of religion. He wanted to discover the psychological underpinnings of religious belief and the individual's subordination to its dictates. Not content with recognizing that there is no "reason" to believe in God, he asks, Why is God necessary? What *hidden* needs are served by religion? Stirner's effort to pierce the veils of ideology, with the self-deception it entails, and discover the authentic self started the piecing together of a theory of human behavior.

Carroll sees Stirner as having anticipated Adorno's notion of the "authoritarian personality" with his own analysis of internalized authority, summed up in his statement about every Prussian carrying a gendarme in his own breast. It is also an anticipation of Freud's description of the superego as the image of parental (paternal) authority and of W. Reich's concept of the "emotional plague." The materialist view of authority as a strictly external force of coercion (e.g., Engels' "bodies of armed

men" who enforce the will of the state as executive arm of the bourgeois class) is inadequate.

Marx and Stirner probably never met. Marx's *German Ideology*, the greater part of which was written as a polemic against Stirner, was completed in 1846, though it was not published as a whole until 1932. Stirner criticized socialist and communist ideals in general; Marx, on the other hand, targeted Stirner directly and personally. What is interesting to note is that Stirner served as a major formative, albeit negative, influence on Marx. Marx's attack on Stirner finds a twentieth-century echo in Lukács' critique of Nietzsche.

Marx's criticisms of Stirner can be summarized as follows: 1) Stirner offers a history of ideas without reference to actual events and the social environment in which they take place. 2) The individual is an abstract concept without meaning in the context of society. 3) Stirner's position is ideological because it doesn't understand the determining role of material forces in history. Individualism is seen as an ideology of the petty bourgeoisie.

Although some aspects of these objections are not without merit, Marx mistakenly saw Stirner as an idealist philosopher in the sense represented by Hegel (i.e., one who strives speculatively to understand the nature of Man and the whole of history). In Stirner's view, there are ideas and subjective desires that do not merely reflect the social environment and the action of groups. Engels (who initially thought favorably of *The Ego and His Own*) and Marx didn't know, in a sense, how to respond to the irrationalist core of Stirner's outlook except by labeling it religious. Marx put it thus: "In revolutionary activity the changing of oneself coincides with the changing of circumstances." He thought that with Stirner, rebellion takes place



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only in the mind, that ideas alone can change property relations and make history. Can the state, money, and private property be simply willed out of existence? Marx and Engels decide that individual interests undergo no alienation through identification with the revolutionary class, and that an egoist's insurrection achieves little against the organized power of the capitalist system. Stirner does not deny that humans are conditioned by their environment. But he points out that only when a person goes beyond social identity and roles does uniqueness and creativity begin. Stirner does not pretend to expound a total social theory. He charges that socialism and communism represent new abstract goals to which real individuals and their desires will be sacrificed.

Egoism or mutual aid—is there an irreconcilable antagonism between the two? There is, says Carroll, if each is taken as an Absolute or a categorical imperative. Carroll touches on, but does not tackle, the attempted synthesis of Marx and Stirner in what has been called "communist egoism." Unlike marxist scholar Paul Thomas, who in *Karl Marx and the Anarchists* clearly sided with the Grand Old Man, he allows that Herr S. and Herr M. both scored points in the encounter. He says in Stirner's favor that the debate should not be seen as a simple question of the isolated individual versus society. Here Carroll makes a parallel with the distinction made by sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies between *Gesellschaft* (commercial society at large) and *Gemeinschaft* (community). Stirner's concept of the Union of Egoists, conceived as coming under the latter category, embraces, according to the ethic of friendship, only small groups where real face-to-face relationships are possible while rejecting the imperative to sacrifice one's own interests for an abstract social totality, such as nation, race, or class.

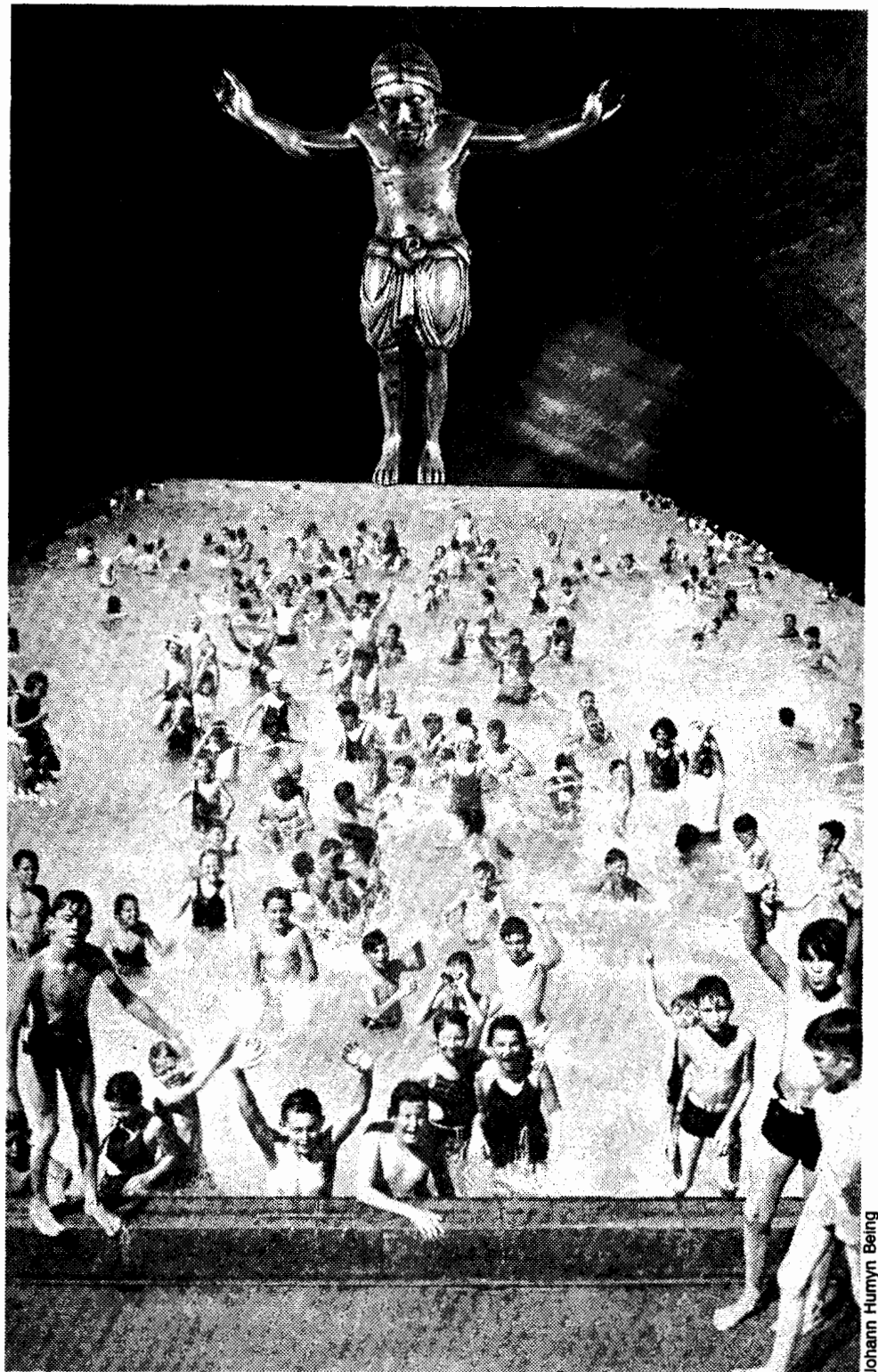
In modern times, the egoist/übermensch has found an embodiment in the lives of certain artists; one in particular, German-born dadaist and surrealist Max Ernst, felt a special affinity with Stirner. Both Stirner and Nietzsche praised creativity and play. The early Marx would have largely agreed. But after 1844, Marx turned his attention increasingly toward the descriptive analysis of political economy, and away from questions of the poetic, ludic realization of human liberty, and the alienating quality of labor itself. He started thinking of his project as a scientific one and believed, in utilitarian fashion, that a rational social order could be achieved. Carroll speculates that the obsessive character of the Stirner section of the *German Ideology* indicated a great unresolved inner conflict within Marx, who used Stirner as the external object or scapegoat to cover up his own bad conscience for not taking up the cause of *Homo ludens* as seriously as he could have.

If Stirner was the early pioneer of psychology, Carroll believes that Nietzsche was a more mature thinker who "superseded" him. Carroll compares Stirner's ideal of self-realization with that of the *Bildungsroman*. Education, conceived as the exploration and understanding of one's own feelings, is a ceaseless process of becoming that is not beholden to ready-made

responses. Nietzsche's and Freud's advances consisted in a greater appreciation of the complexity of the individual psyche. In Freud's metaphor, it is an iceberg, with the conscious part making up only the visible summit. Nietzsche likened the I to a bridge on which traffic is constantly in motion. The unconscious self Freud, following Groddeck, called the It (usually

and perhaps inadequately translated as the Id). The ego grows in the matrix of instinctual needs that make up the It. The drive to form relationships is, in Freud's view, secondary, and love has an inherently narcissistic foundation.

The superego is the other element of Freud's tripartite model of the psyche. Here is the repository of ideology, of civilization and its



Johann Humyn Being

demands. The egoist in Stirner's sense is a hedonist who believes that everything is possible and does not recognize the limits of what Freud called the reality-principle. Carroll believes that Stirner had a naive optimism concerning the compatibility of individual maturity and gratified desire. In Freud's view, self-understanding is achieved through a series of traumatic life-events. Maturity is defined as becoming one's own center of gravity. Nietzsche also held that psychological constraints are inherent in the human condition. He (and Kierkegaard) took up a theme that had appeared in Hegel—that anxiety lies at the root of consciousness and is not, as Stirner tended to see it, identified solely with repression and morality. Goethe was the prototype of the *übermensch* that Nietzsche had in mind; it was Goethe's great discipline and self-mastery that Nietzsche admired, his Apollonian control of strong (Dionysian) passions.

On the other hand, Stirner's egoist is more democratic than Nietzsche's elitist *übermensch* (who is more stoic, even ascetical). For Stirner, everyman has the resources to achieve greatness. Enjoyment is conceived as refined hedonism and is linked to aestheticism (Stirner favors craftsmanship over industrial manufacture). The individualist rebel is at odds with civilization, but is inextricably part of it; the individual is a cultural-historical phenomenon, not a purely instinctual, natural being. Freud, like Marx, had a scientific rationalist for a super-ego, which was the source of much of his conservative side (e.g., his justification of the necessity for instinctual repression to make civilization function).

Stirner's time was the early Romantic period, before the Industrial Revolution had hit the German-speaking world, but he knew English and, through his acquaintance with Adam Smith's writings, which he translated into German, he was aware of industrialism's conquering power in Britain. Nietzsche and Freud lived in a world where science and technology were much more visibly triumphant but whose very discoveries (e.g., the law of thermodynamic entropy) started to undermine rationalist and positivist certainties and probably helped provoke the mood of late Romantic pessimism.

The anarcho-psychologists rejected one of the greatest assumptions of the nineteenth century, Progress, and were very skeptical about scientific materialism. Of the three, Dostoyevsky staked out the most extreme criticism of science and technology. He accused empirical natural science of withering human instincts and retarding human creative powers. Can the emotions be calculated and quantified? he asks. What makes us human is not how useful we are, but how superfluous. In his novels, characters find themselves in situations where they are overwhelmed by elemental passions and do not have occasion to be self-reflective or analytical.

In 1862 Dostoyevsky visited London during an exhibition that featured a structure called the Crystal Palace, which was built as a showcase of all the latest machinery, technology, and emblems of progress. The Russian writer saw

the Crystal Palace as a symbol of the bourgeois utilitarian paradise that the Western world had become—a world where the passions were pacified, risk and the tragic sense of life eliminated, and the human being reduced to a domesticated automaton consumer. The killing boredom of this sleep of Reason produces monsters of nihilism and cruelty. The denizen, or inmate, of the Crystal Palace is what Nietzsche called "the last man," the bourgeois (and the bourgeoisified worker) who pays for comfort with boredom, adopts a herd mentality, and is hostile to spontaneous curiosity and imagination.

Dostoyevsky was only a briefly an anarchist. His critique of modernity reached the point of extreme conservatism, slavophilism, and the hope for a renewed Christianity. In *The Possessed* he bitterly criticized anarchism of all varieties. His mysticism puts him at odds with Stirner and Nietzsche. Dostoyevsky's worldview is distilled into the "Grand Inquisitor" section of *The Brothers Karamazov*. The Grand Inquisitor is a consummate politician, a paternalistic scientific materialist and social engineer, shepherd of a human herd to whom he metes out the calculus of the greatest good for the greatest number by dispensing bread and circuses. On the other side is Christ, who responds, inexplicably, to the Grand Inquisitor's indictments with a kiss (the anarchist?).

The section dealing with anarcho-psychology's critique of knowledge is the most difficult part of the book. Individualist psychology repudiates the notion of absolute truth (Truth is another oppressive abstraction like God or Man). The attack on truth, though, also attacks the very process of critical reflection. Nietzsche upholds paradoxical over formal logic. The Will is seen as more important than Reason. Knowledge is primarily subjective and has limits; it annihilates itself on one plane even as it establishes itself on another. In other words, the only certain knowledge is that there is no certainty. Things can be known only as they are conditioned by the cognitive process. His theory of knowledge is perspectivist; it rejects monism and holds room for plural and competing cosmologies. Nietzsche saw far, perhaps too far, into the schizophrenic condition of a life torn between competing, and incompatible, principles. Such a condition can reach the point, as it did for Nietzsche, where reason as the mediator of personal experiences breaks down.

Dostoyevsky also felt that the individual life is unknowable by objective, positivist science. He could grant that the knowledge of mathematics and natural science is true in a sense, but he wanted to know what the psychological, existential effects of such truths were. He feared that rationalist empiricism was robbing the world of all enchantment, and that passions were threatened by the attempt to pin them down by scientific laws. The tree of knowledge and the tree of life seem to grow apart; Goethe's *Faust* laments his long years of academic study because he feels they have taught him nothing about life and its enjoyment.

Carroll speaks of the importance of placing intellectuals and their works in historical context.

"We have, in traversing the past, only to do with what is *present*" (Hegel). Stirner in 1844, he says, does not mean the same thing as Stirner in 1972 (the year of this book's writing)—and we could add, for that matter, Stirner in 1997. As Stirner himself put it, how his readers (who are historical subjects in their unique individuality) decide to apply his thoughts to their own lives is their own affair. Carroll's verdict on Stirner's brand of here-and-now egoism is that it is suited primarily to a marginal or bohemian life outside the mainstream of society, in part because of its rejection of organized politics, and that's pretty accurate. Stirner was not a nihilist, because he had personal, if not social, values. And although Nietzsche is also often associated with nihilism, he was engaged in a constant search for the "revaluation of values."

Carroll mentions the failures of marxism, but not those of psychoanalysis. He seems to make too much of the three protagonists as forerunners of mid-twentieth-century existentialism. And what about the revolutionary passions of the 1960s so recent at the time Carroll wrote this book? He mentions Adorno, Marcuse, and other luminaries of the Frankfurt School; Wilhelm Reich; and Norman O. Brown. The more radical currents of that time (e.g., the Situationists and the Dutch Provos) are not considered; Carroll merely makes a reference or two to the insurgent French students of 1968. Here again "yet another effort" toward the 'synthesis of social revolution and individualist insurrection is necessary. The concept of the egoist as artistic creator can be augmented by the surrealist notion of the "communism of genius" or the situationist slogan "art made by all or not at all": an aesthetic that is realized not in artworks but in a life of passion and rebellion.

Break-out from the Crystal Palace is excessively academic and sociological. The social, or "soft," sciences no less than the physical, or "hard," sciences, can be criticized from the positions elaborated by the subjects of this book. Were Stirner, Nietzsche, or Dostoyevsky alive today, it seems likely they would not be particularly pleased with contemporary sociology and psychology any more than they would be with all the other fragmented specialisms that make up the knowledge of modern civilization, which has moved with baneful and painful absurdity even further along precisely the lines they so presciently critiqued.

The question of fascism is touched on only lightly. Early fascism certainly tapped in to the *Lebensphilosophie* prevalent at the end of the nineteenth century, with which the anarcho-psychological critique was associated, and bent it to its own purposes (i.e., the Victorian British commercial utilitarianism lambasted by Nietzsche and Dostoyevsky was now contrasted unfavorably with the supposedly more vital and naturalistic Teutonic culture). Stirner, who, like Sorel, had considered prevailing society senile and in need of fresh, invigorating passions, appealed to the young Mussolini and to the French intellectual aesthete fascist Robert Brasillach (see William Tucker's *The Fascist Ego*). Carroll rightly exonerates Nietzsche of the

Continued on next page

Guy Debord—Revolutionary

Reviewed by John Zerzan

Guy Debord—Revolutionary by Len Bracken (Feral House, 2532 Lincoln Blvd., Suite 359, Venice CA 90021, 1997) 267pp. \$14.95 paper.

In the mid-90s Len Bracken edited and published *Extraphile*, a very lively and very Debordian magazine. When I heard of his biography of Debord, "the first in any language," I frankly wondered whether it would merit the additional claim, that of being a *critical* biography.

It was my pleasure to discover that Bracken has indeed managed some critical distance from his subject, and has produced a most substantial intellectual biography. It is, it should be noted right off, a treatment of Debord's political/philosophical project, not the story of his personal life. There is very little of the latter; his heavy drinking is referred to only in passing, for example, and his two marriages merely cited.

A couple of quibbles: the book does contain a few small errors that I found occasionally distracting. In the matter of dates, for example, we are told that poet Arthur Craven died in 1918 and, two paragraphs later, that he "disappeared in Mexico in 1920." Marx, it is recorded, died in 1863, which is twenty years premature. Later in the volume one reads of the German revolution of 1948, that Marx predicted in 1947; obviously a century late. Social theorist Lucien Goldmann and film-maker Jean-Luc Godard are misspelled throughout the book and in the index, as Goldman and Goddard.

And Bracken is not what I would call a prose

stylist. The writing is generally serviceable, at times a little better than that, but often clunky and occasionally opaque. For an example of the latter, I could not coax a clear meaning from this sentence: "Lukacs developed Marx's concept of fetishism with psychology and history into reification in large part by positing the proletariat as the subject-object of history."

Guy Debord (1931–1994) was the leading figure of the avant-garde Lettrist International of the 1950s and, more importantly, the central theoretician of the Situationist International (1957–1972). He and other Situationists, like the Surrealists twenty years earlier, sought to deepen their cultural critique by appropriations from marxism. But while the surrealists tried to strengthen their aesthetic protests, in the 1920s and '30s, via involvement in leninist perspectives (stalinism and then trotskyism), Debord and his coterie brought in the relatively more libertarian variant of marxism, council communism.

Bracken refers to a rather autocratic style of Debord in the S.I., at least in passing, which is related to a larger, and undiscussed problem: a situationist fetish of organization. The fixation with internal organization was, in turn, connected to what Debord saw as the over-arching solution to the social question: the "absolute power of workers' councils." For his part, Bracken at least mentions the "apparent contradiction" between a councilist solution to alienation and the equally strong situationist emphasis on festival, play, enjoyment without restraint, etc. He writes that in this latter regard and in his personal life, Debord "didn't value work in the least." But it might have been fruitful to discuss the rather obvious tension between a unitary power based on the category of work, to which all issues would be submitted, and abundant rhetoric about an equally unrestricted focus on ludic individuality.

A great strength of the book is the background Bracken provides on the development of Debord's thinking. Very adequate thumbnail sketches of often difficult-to-condense influences (e.g. Hegel, Lukacs, Lefebvre) illuminate the sources of Debord's maturation as radical thinker and leader.

His treatment of his subject's masterwork, *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), is likewise strong. Proceeding carefully, Len Bracken sketches the complementary meanings of the concept of spectacle. If I were to advance a criticism here, it is only that this highly important work does not essentially escape its huge debt to Hegel and Marx, and that herein lie the grounds from which to discuss its limitations. When it is disclosed that life has somehow moved from being lived to being experienced as representation, a discussion of representation itself becomes possible, for example.

Of course, it is easy and maybe unfair to demand everything from a text written thirty

years ago, including, to cite another theme, at least a slight realization of the pitfalls, shall we say, of society as a machine for production and a technological construct. My own orientation, to be more positive, has been greatly aided by the odyssey of Guy Debord: I have been deeply moved by his works, especially the defiantly elegiac, brief memoir *Panegyric*, and the passionate and so nearly comprehensive (film) book *In Girum Imus Nocte et Consumimur Igni* (*We Go Round and Round in the Night and Are Consumed by Fire*).

As Len Bracken concludes, even if Debord's theses become dated it will be his courage that will continue to serve as inspiring method. *In Girum...* ends with a personal valediction that I will never forget: "As these last reflections on violence still show, for me there will be no going back and no reconciliation. There will be no good conduct."

Drawing Life

Reviewed by John Zerzan

Drawing Life: Surviving the Unabomber by David Gelernter (The Free Press, New York, NY, 1997) 159pp. \$21.00 hardcover.

The reigning social order definitively needs its unsubtle, single-minded champions of artificial intelligence, virtual reality, cloning, and the like, if it hopes to eliminate the undomesticated and ensure a totally synthetic and estranged world. But it requires the services of its humanist apologists even more, in the struggle for the acceptance of the unthinkable. It needs the voices of those who can reassure by "looking at all sides" of the question, who calmly counsel us to remember that technology "isn't everything"—as they strive to disarm growing doubt as to its totalizing menace.

David Gelernter is precisely one of these latter smoothies, who sells the computerization of life, while claiming to be a reluctant techie and mainly an aesthetically-oriented kind of guy. He criticizes the weaker and peripheral anti-tech arguments, strenuously avoiding the basic ones, and thus helps to sell the project as a whole. As a computer science professor at Yale, he has been amply rewarded for his services—and also punished: on June 24, 1993, Gelernter suffered permanent disfigurement of his right hand and possibly permanent damage to his right eye when he opened a package from the Unabomber.

This explosion, perhaps not surprisingly, has altered his outlook to some degree, and inspired a nasty little book. *Drawing Life* departs from the tone of cultured "Renaissance Man" who sagely accepts the inevitable techno-future while leisurely imparting the comfortable mes-

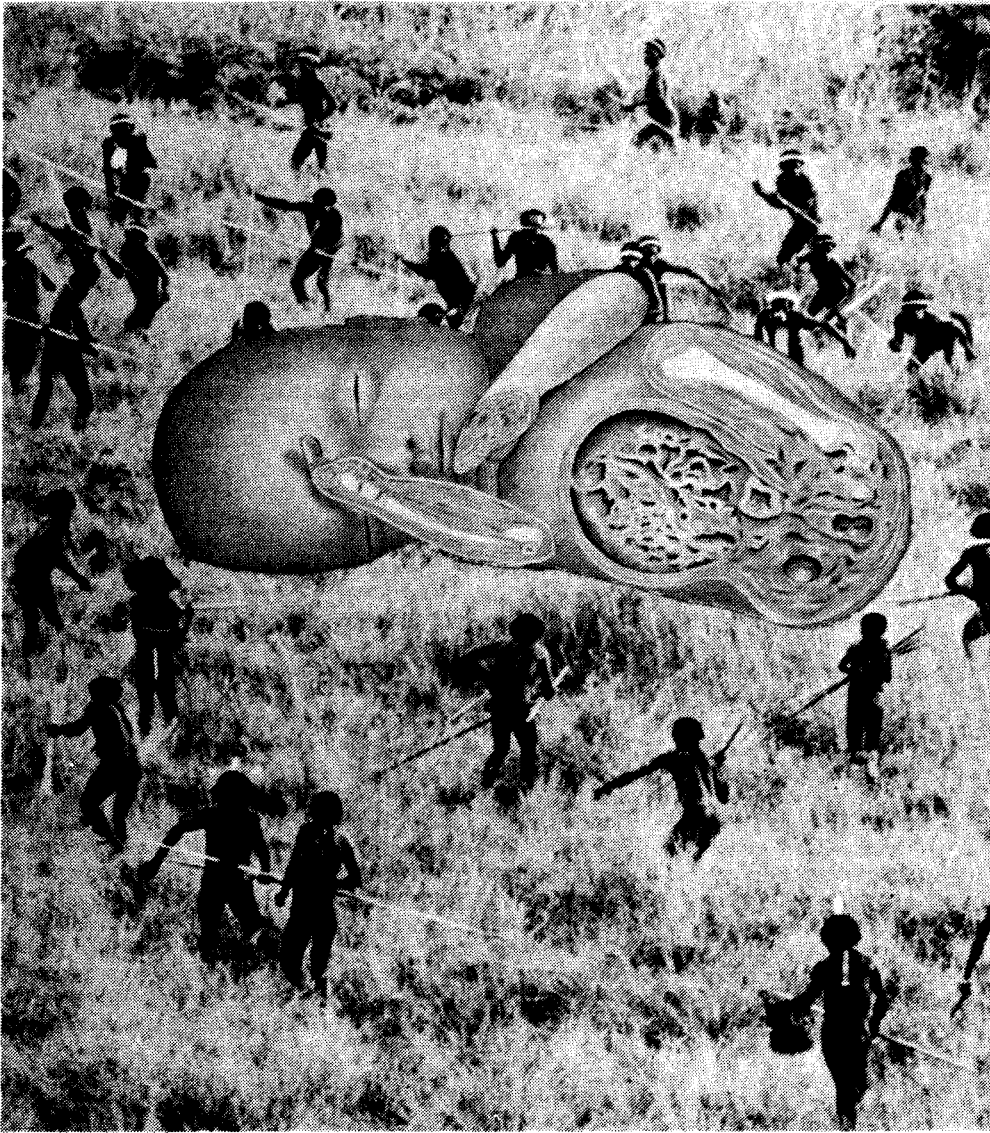
Break-out...

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charge of protofascist tendencies (he and Stirner both unambiguously denounced German and pan-Germanic nationalism), but the quite real Nazi connections of Nietzsche's dubious intellectual heir Heidegger are not examined.

And, as the book was published in 1974, it says nothing about the phenomenon of postmodernism, which has also laid claim to the mantle of Nietzsche's legacy.

But *Break-out...* provides much to ponder and wrestle with. It's an important book and definitely worth examining. In it Stirner, Nietzsche, and Dostoyevsky are presented as difficult, inspiring, and flawed champions of rebellion and the unceasing quest for self-understanding, self-realization, and new values. If it is true, as Carroll claims, that the critique of rationalist *Homo economicus* exploded into the open and into mass attitudes only after World War II, then the ideas of the "anarcho-psychologists" are, in some sense, in everyone's head, fueling the ongoing revolution of everyday life.



Johann Humyn Being

sage that we'll be able somehow to ensure that this future turns out well. Rather, this latest book, nicely timed for the advent of the Theodore Kaczynski trial, is a very embittered screed of the kind one might get from a typical Rush Limbaugh fan.

Drawing Life draws a bead on the usual right-wing targets: intellectuals, feminists, etc. The '60s, obviously amounted to a Very Bad Thing, full of tolerance and freedoms. Vaguely aware of the growing crisis of society, Gelernter sets up a good vs. evil framework that castigates the afflicted for their whining and lack of ethical fortitude. He offers his sour moralisms in lieu of analysis, never bringing the basic logic of this death's-head system into the equation. Of course he never faces up to the Unabomber's "Industrial System and Its Future," because it would undo his entire little rant. Once more of a confident liberal, now Gelernter rails shrilly in a threadbare game of blaming the victims. A pity he couldn't have found a way to also condemn species for disappearing, or old-growth trees for being cut down.

In his treatise, the Unabomber tried to uncover the social and historic why of the snuffing out of freedom and fulfillment from our lives. As the eco-disaster in Southeast Asia rages (fall '97), the fires of domestication join the toxins of industrialism. I find it not a little obscene for the lackey Gelernter to continue to enrich himself with what amounts to his latest homage to the demise of the individual and the natural world.

Talk Dirty to Me

Reviewed by Maria Mitchell

Talk Dirty to Me: An Intimate Philosophy of Sex by Sallie Tisdale (Doubleday, New York, NY, 1994) 338pp. \$22.95 hardcover.

About three years ago, I came across an article in *Harper's* by Sallie Tisdale. It was only a couple of pages long, but it sparked a significant change in my behavior. Tisdale's

article discussed pornography, which she recommended. Intrigued by her confessional yet thought-provoking piece, I became for the first time an occasional patron of the X-rated section of the local video store. Shyly, I asked certain close friends if they had read the article, and what their reaction was. I learned with interest that Tisdale was writing a book on the philosophy of sex.

Talk Dirty to Me received more media attention than any of Sallie Tisdale's earlier books. (She had previously written about the geography and culture of the Pacific Northwest, life in a nursing home, and salt.) As soon as I found out the title, I requested that the public library buy the book, and placed a hold on it. That was in November. Checking the online catalog soon after the book's publication, I found there were nine holds on three copies. My turn came around the first of March.

Meanwhile, I stopped in at our neighborhood bookstore, and judged the price too steep for my budget. Some of that cost must have gone into the book's beautiful design and black dustjacket. I opted for delayed gratification. Only when I finally checked out a library copy did I discover the arresting front cover photograph, an unusually seductive fruit or vegetable held tenderly in someone's fingers. Is it an unripe peach? a weird tomato? a mutant apple? Whatever it is, it looks startlingly like...someone's bare bottom? a hairless vulva? Whatever it looks like, it is definitely...disturbing? exciting? illusory?

And this cover is a perfect introduction to what is perhaps the main theme of *Talk Dirty to Me*. Tisdale reports on some of her own sexual experiences, and explores what sex means to quite an array of other people, in light of her steadfast belief in the idiosyncratic uniqueness of each individual's sexual response. In the name of freedom, she defends the right of any person to pursue his or her path to sexual fulfillment. In answer to "conservative feminists" who argue that pornography is inherently sexist and violent towards women, Tisdale posits her own assumption about the limits to morally acceptable sexual activity: no harm to others, no harm to oneself, physically or emotionally.

Within these limits, which make sense to me, there is room for both freedom and tolerance. "The main reason I resist censoring any form of speech or expression is a selfish one," Tisdale writes. "I know that sooner or later something I write or something I want to read or see or talk about is going to be forbidden." In *Talk Dirty to Me*, Tisdale names the unnameable, going behind the scenes of the ongoing sex movies—explicit or covert—that bombard us every day on television, on the street, in the workplace, in recreational settings—and yes, at home. Whatever Catherine MacKinnon or Andrea Dworkin might say about it, this is a liberating book. It's also a good read. Ask your library to buy a copy.

Kinks in space

Review by Dave Mandl

X-Ray by Ray Davies (The Overlook Press, Woodstock, NY, 1996) 420pp. \$15.95 paper.

Sure, Ray Davies seems bitter, but if you'd had to put up with the kind of abuse that Ray and his band have for the last 30 years, you wouldn't be all smiles either. Squirring through the occasional melodramatic excesses of *X-Ray*, "The Unauthorized Autobiography," is a small price to pay to finally hear the Kinks' story from Davies's own mouth.

X-Ray is a memoir wrapped in a science fiction story not unlike the hokey rock operas Davies was writing in the mid-seventies. In it, The Corporation, which controls the world and has effaced all traces of individuality and personal freedom, sends a cub writer to get the life story of Davies, now a sad and hermetic old man. Their real intention, of course, is to destroy the former Kinks frontman, who, powerless and forgotten as he is, still possesses knowledge, memories, and dreams whose very existence pose a threat to the sterile New Order. As the young writer hears Ray's story, he comes to the unavoidable conclusion that The Corporation is evil, and in the end resolves to work against it.

This rather thin meta-story doesn't intrude much on Ray's reminiscences (which don't go very far beyond the late sixties, to the undoubted relief of Kinks fans everywhere), and ends up being a clever vehicle for Davies to speak in both the first and third person, making observations about his own personality that would be impossible in a straight autobiography. Still, the main thrill is having the normally reticent Davies spill the details on Kinks mysteries that have been the subject of speculation for years: his childhood, his nervous breakdown(s), the band's notorious management problems, and most of all, their years-long ban from America.

An outsider even when the Kinks were the toast of the pop scene, Davies never cared much for the modern world, and held political views that were, unfashionably, neither left nor right. His childhood experiences with doctors, shrinks, and unsympathetic teachers led him to distrust authority early on. The terrifying primal experience of finding out that his father had lost his job, and then spying him at the labor exchange collecting his unemployment check, left a lasting impression on him; so did an early stint in the printing shop of a magazine, where his crotchety unionist co-workers spent their days bitching about the management and lecturing him for working during his tea breaks. (He eventually began pretending not to work so they wouldn't give him a hard time.) In time he learned, to his dismay, that even pop stardom and a string of number-one hits wouldn't free him from the con-men and gangsters who really run the world. He grew to detest not only the nameless aristocrats in the City who wrecked people's lives by moving slips of paper around,

but also the sham socialism of England's Labor government—and the modern Welfare State in general, with its hatred of individuality, its bureaucracy, and its "people in grey."

After a few years producing hugely popular anthems like "You Really Got Me," "All Day and All of the Night," and "Where Have All the Good Times Gone," reinventing rock and roll along the way (thanks in large part to brother Dave's proto-punk guitar style), Davies began aiming his chainsaw wit at various deserving social targets, establishing himself as a kind of modern-day Oscar Wilde. He skewered foppish Carnaby Street fashion victims ("Dedicated Follower of Fashion") and upper-class twits ("A Well-Respected Man," "Mr. Pleasant," "House in the Country") to the delight of everyone, including—in the spirit of the free and jocular sixties—foppish Carnaby Street fashion victims and upper-class twits. He mocked session musicians (and by implication, modern capitalism, with its emphasis on efficiency and rationalism) in "Session Man," and ridiculed America's conversion of paradise into a commercial theme park in "Holiday in Waikiki." The Kinks were probably the first pop group to record a song with openly gay overtones ("See My Friends"), and the first to use Indian drones on a rock record (ditto).

But deep down, Ray was hopelessly out of step with the sixties youth culture. In the pre-Sgt. Pepper days of September 1966, the Kinks released (as a single, no less) the bleak "Dead End Street," an almost morbid piece of social realism about cracked ceilings, rent collectors, and the meager prospects that the

future held for most British citizens—Peace, Love, and Mary Quant notwithstanding. While Swinging London was in full bloom, Davies committed the hipness-crime of getting married, moving into a modest bedsit a short walk from where he grew up, and voluntarily spending time wheeling a baby carriage and doing household chores. On the *Village Green Preservation Society* LP, he pulled out all the stops, devoting the whole record to attacks on the modern world and reminiscences of the pre-industrial age ("We are the Office Block Persecution Affinity. God save little shops, china cups, and virginity..."). In the song "People Take Pictures of Each Other," he even ridiculed photography: "People take pictures of the summer, just in case someone thought they had missed it, and to prove that it really existed. Fathers take pictures of the mothers, and the sisters take pictures of brothers, just to show that they love one another. You can't picture love that you took from me, when we were young and the world was free..." This was obviously light-years beyond the quaint nostalgia of "Penny Lane."

Unfortunately, not very many people got to hear it. Thanks to a performing ban on the Kinks in the United States, courtesy of the American Federation of Musicians, the band was rendered effectively invisible in this country throughout their most creative period. The reasons for the ban have always been cloudy at best, and Davies himself has avoided talking about it, but in *X-Ray*, he grudgingly broaches the subject, revealing that...he never quite knew the reason himself. Among the many enemies



the Kinks made on their early U.S. tours, the most likely candidate seems to be a patriotic jerk who worked for a TV show that the Kinks appeared on. He accused the band of being late, and after several "Commie wimp" and "limey bastard" jibes that made it clear he was holding the Kinks personally responsible for the entire British Invasion, he threatened to show "just how powerful America is" by filing a report on the band and "making sure they never worked in the USA again."

While losing a fortune by having America closed off to the band, Ray also had to contend with years of litigation, trying to extricate the group from the usurious recording and publishing contracts they had signed when they were still teenagers. These nightmares, combined with the hell of touring, the band's off-and-on battles with the press (who preferred more media-friendly groups like the Beatles), and the tremendous pressure exerted on Davies to keep producing hit records, caused him to have at least one full-fledged nervous breakdown. He seemed constantly on the brink of others—as, for example, when his wife Rasa (who can be heard singing on most of the Kinks' early records) left him—but ultimately survived even his creative nadir in the seventies, when, by his own admission, he "shouldn't have been allowed to make records."

The years have been extremely kind to Ray Davies's songs and the Kinks' records, and if Davies hasn't quite gotten over the mistreatment he has had to endure from managers, lawyers, TV producers, redneck sheriffs, and the press over the years, there aren't too many people more deserving of the right to whine a little. X-Ray is one of the most sincere and compelling rock and roll memoirs I've read (and I haven't even mentioned any of the sex stories). While it may be hard to appreciate for those who aren't familiar with Davies's work, this can be easily rectified with a couple of weekends listening to *Face to Face*, *Something Else*, *Village Green Preservation Society*, *The Kinks Kronicles*, and *Muswell Hillbillies*. Which you should be doing anyway.

Lords of Poverty

Reviewed by Joseph Heathcott

Lords of Poverty: The Freewheeling Lifestyles, Power, Prestige, and Corruption of the Multibillion Dollar Aid Business by Graham Hancock (Mandarin Paperbacks, London, England, 1994 [2nd Printing]) 234pp. paper.

In the mid-1980s, senior staff at the World Bank, employing various illegal means, managed to land a copy of a damning manuscript. Written by Graham Hancock, the former East African correspondent for *The Economist*, a co-editor of *New Internationalist* magazine, and editor of *Africa Guide*, the manuscript was a work in progress, a culmination of nearly fifteen years experience with the "Aid-Industrial Complex." From that point until the Ms. was pub-

lished as *Lords of Poverty*, the World Bank mandarins tried every variety of dirty pool to stall Hancock's access to Bank information, documents and personnel. Despite their efforts, *Lords of Poverty* was put to the presses in 1989 by MacMillan, and has enjoyed no less than nine subsequent print runs with Mandarin Paperbacks.

There is no mystery about the widespread appeal of Hancock's exposé: there is something in it for everyone. For the neo- and paleoconservative, there is solace in Hancock's compelling figures of billions of taxpayer dollars wasted through Liberal Foreign Aid on flawed and ill-conceived projects. For progressives and leftists Hancock raises the crucial questions of democratic control, just distribution of resources, and accountability—or lack thereof in the case of such institutions as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the various UN agencies. And for the libertarian and anarchist, Hancock extols the intelligence, capabilities, and creativity of ordinary people in the Third World countries where aid monies, entrenched regimes, and global capitalist muscle squelch self-help options for the poor.

This last component of Hancock's analysis is of particular importance given his elaboration of the liberal humanitarian ethic, which he describes as "inherently ethnocentric, paternalistic, and patronizing," which depends on notions of Northern technical and cultural superiority, and which conditions aid technocrats to despise indigenous knowledges. This ethic among Bank and UN elites produces the most potent ideological blocks to meaningful economic transformation through people-centered and controlled development.

Lords of Poverty's most practical utility is its concise overview of the aid industry, broken down into major bilateral and multilateral players, their histories, internecine antagonisms and turf wars. Hancock stands conventional wisdom on its head by indicting this complex of institutions with a long list of disasters, as well as a structural and ideological commitment to Northern trade domination—as opposed to "aid." From his chapter on so-called development industry "experts," appropriately titled "The Midas Touch," Hancock provides an eloquent summary:

Roads that end in rivers and then continue blithely onward on the other side, silos without power supplies, highly sophisticated equipment that no one can use installed in remote places, aquaculture projects producing fish at \$4,000 per kilo for consumption by African peasants who do not even earn \$400 a year, dams that dispossess thousands and spread fatal water-borne diseases, resettlement schemes that make the migrants poorer than they were before they left home, that destroy the environment and that obliterate tribal peoples—such blunders are *not* quaint exceptions to some benign and general rule of development. On the contrary, they are the rule.

The Aid-Industrial Complex, Hancock explains, is close cousin to the military and prison industries. It is largely state-subsidized growth

industry in which taxpayers are compelled to provide much or all of the working capital for the benefit of industry personnel—in this case the Byzantine bureaucracies of the Bank, the Fund and the UN. In fact, as Hancock's research shows, 70 cents of every US dollar earmarked for Foreign Aid never actually leaves the US, and in the UK the figure is upwards of 80 to 90 percent. Most of the money is used for salaries, perks and material purchase within the metropole for projects overseas. Very little of the capital is actually spent or invested in the communities where the projects are being assembled, and local people are never consulted for their experience, understanding, technical knowledge and approval.

The benefits for the poor in so-called developing countries are marginal and questionable at best, and at worst saddle them with enormous, inappropriate, capital-draining and environment-destroying hydropower, aquaculture and agribusiness projects. Thus, "aid" ends up as one more form of corporate welfare: large chunks of taxpayer-provided capital funneled through opaque bureaucracies into purchase orders earmarked for transnational corporations. Hancock points to the irony of this statist protection racket, glibly and daily subverting the "principles of free trade" which are the rhetorical pillar or the North's economic agenda.

Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns

Review by Joseph Heathcott

Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns: Better Living With Less Traffic by David Engwicht (New Society Publishers, Philadelphia, PA, 1995.) 190pp. paper.

Like many New Society books I have read in the past few years, this recent publication suffers from a combination of overwrought, vague and metaphorical writing on the one hand, and an editorial process that lacks the necessary spine to hone the author's ramblings into coherent prose. This is not to say the works lack merit, but that writers for New Society would be well served with a closer, more severe editorial approach. While authors can be forgiven their occasional lapses, or even their outright factual distortions, that these permeate a finished publication is the fault solely of the consultant editors.

With this caveat in mind, *Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns* should be read with a shaker of salt to sprinkle over particular sections which wax "historical" and "scientific." The overindulgent use of neologisms such as "Eco-city," "Eco-relational thinking," and "Eco-rights," as well as the proclivity toward absurd historical generalizations should earn the errant editorial staff a spanking. At the same time, Engwicht is capable of provocative insights and pragmatic flashes which can be of use to grass roots activists.

The majority of historical offenses derive from

Engwicht's romantic notion of both pre-industrial cities and current (read "timeless") European metropolises. Before the Industrial Revolution, for example, "people [what people?] viewed their cities holistically, organically, as an eco-system." Then, somehow, people became slaves to a mechanistic, materialist (*sic*) worldview that led cities to be transformed into "machines." Moreover, before "Newton ushered in the Scientific Age" (he did not—no one person ever ushers in an entire age), people "thought ecologically," but today the only repositories of this kind of thinking are "indigenous cultures" and "many women." Not content to contain his generalizations there, Engwicht contrasts the "pro-urban European psyche" with the "Anglo-Saxon loathing of the city," a pathos for which he blames the L.A. riots. As an off-and-on editor myself, I would never have allowed such gratuitously blanket statements to be printed on my press.

However the editors cannot be blamed for Engwicht's naive view of cities as "places of mutual exchange," as "Eco-systems" which carefully balance out the multitude of experiences in daily life. Indeed, no one but Engwicht—and a particular philosophical bent—can be held responsible for this functionalist and reductive teleology of the city. Cities do have those qualities, of course, but they are also arenas in which people contest, conflict, struggle, and hustle, where many modes of experience overlap: oppression, exploitation, ecstasy, delirium, tedium, and so on. Engwicht's dedication to a moral holism overlooks the many ways in which the experience of the city is fragmented by divisions that probably don't impinge upon, hinder, or effect the author (race, class, gender, to name a few).

To the extent that these fragmentations exist, Engwicht's holistic city can absorb them as pluralities which contribute to the richness of the whole. This attitude makes Engwicht less interested in leveling class divisions than in creating mixed-income neighborhoods so that both poor people and rich people can be edified by the encounter. A way to stave off class war perhaps? "Each new community," he opines, "should have all types of housing: walk-up flats, cheap speculative housing, special purpose housing for the aged, housing for University students, and prestige housing." Excuse me, but speculative housing? Prestige housing? Aren't speculation and class differences, manifest in the uses of urban land, two of the chief problems facing cities today?

Engwicht does at least provide a useful discussion of the political and economic contexts of auto-dominated cities. Citing the pre-eminence of a technocratic elite formulating compartmentalized plans for urban land use, Engwicht describes how this disempowers people, and alienates them from a landscape that should be theirs to shape and control. Moreover, he chastises political elites for divorcing decisions about the uses and allocations of urban space from ethical and moral implications. In the end, Engwicht is not against experts per se, but rather against the concentration of power and decision-making in the hands

of experts. Planners and engineers should work on a consultative basis with and for neighborhoods and communities, serving democratic rather than autocratic ends.

Furthermore, Engwicht's discussion of the effects of auto-dominated city planning is nuanced and well-crafted. Rationalized, technocratic planning for an automobile infrastructure, he argues, creates isolated and atomized experiences, destroys neighborhoods, reduces people's exchange opportunities, erodes creative spontaneity and chaos, and tramples over social diversity and human rights.

The last chapter of *Reclaiming Our Cities and Towns* outlines particular strategies for "rebuilding" cities. After a long-winded, half-baked, and factually distorted discussion of fractals, chaos models, and other "natural" forms to be emulated in planning, Engwicht finally asserts that the solution lies not in laws but in general shifts in attitudes. Planning decisions, he explains, ought to be made which encourage creative relationships, enhance mutual exchange, and contribute to the quality of life of all people. His proffered strategies, however, constantly refer back to punitive and legislative measures, invoking such authoritarian mechanisms as surveillance cameras, mandatory installation of speed calm-

ing devices in offenders' vehicles, stiff fines and penalties, and coercive surcharges. His point is well taken that the hidden costs of an auto-dominated infrastructure ought to be borne by drivers themselves, but his only recourse for enforcement is the bureaucratic state.

Engwicht's primary shortcoming is a failure to envision new modes of decision-making, new political arrangements that might wrest control of planning from elites. With a battery of good ideas, a workable (if often naive) point of departure for criticism of auto-dominated cities, and a strong moral sense of what needs to be done, Engwicht would have done well to reconsider the channels by which his ideas should be implemented. While his reticence on this front might stem from a desire to forward immediate pragmatic solutions to auto-dominance, he has put the cart before the horse. First we should turn our energies toward how we might change the very basis of decision-making in our society—whether through pragmatic or insurrectionary approaches. In the end, because of his limited analysis of power, Engwicht fails to recognize the extent to which the domination of the urban landscape by automobiles is coterminous with the current political order. One can not be changed without the other.

Social Anarchism revisited

Review by Laure Akai

Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm by Murray Bookchin (AK Press, 22 Lutton Place, Edinburgh, EH8 9PE, Scotland; or POB 40682, San Francisco, CA 94140-0682, USA, 1995) 87pp. £5.95/\$7.95 paper.

As we all know, anarchists are a rather insignificant force in American life, although we can see how many anarchistic ideas have influenced the American mainstream through different processes and see society's constant co-option of radical ideas. We can truly ask ourselves for the hundredth or thousandth time, Why? and we may come up with a mind-boggling multiplicity of interrelated factors. If we are to believe Bookchin, "it is due in no small measure to the changes that have occurred among many anarchists over the past two decades. Like it or not, thousands of self-styled anarchists have slowly surrendered the social core of anarchist ideas to the all pervasive yuppie and New Age personalism that marks this decadent, bourgeoisified era." Talk about ahistoricism! It's as if the thriving anarchist movement got wrecked because of a few books and a few folks who don't like organization (who, despite Bookchin's paranoia, are probably not the majority of anarchists in America, and most of whom shouldn't pose any impediment to Bookchin's "social anarchists," since they move in different circles and often don't even pretend to be anarchists). The facts attest to something very different: that the interest in anarchism has been steadily in decline in America since the first decades of this century (with a few moments of historically

related resuscitation) and that the social anarchists that Bookchin so values (the communists and collectivists who put society over the individual and sought change through organization and programs) themselves failed to bring anarchism to the public, themselves failed to overcome various factors against them and make anarchism immediately desirable for a large number of people.

Bookchin, being not a total idiot, if not totally disingenuous, understands that traditional notions of community, interpersonal relations, and self-organization are rapidly being eroded (if not obliterated) in most urban parts of the states and Europe, yet instead of paying attention to what is killing anarchism as a potential revolutionary force (which in my opinion is a complicated combination of factors such as urbanization, a highly specialized division of labor, the mass consolidation of capitalism and political power, technologically aided instruments of social control, the specters of race and nations, the devastating effects of poverty in light of Protestant ideology, the isolating character of the televised leisure society, etc., ad nauseam, plus some problems stemming from anarchist tactics), Bookchin moralistically and incorrectly puts the blame on people who are no more passive than the masses themselves, but are not the worst of what Bookchin would label lifestyle anarchists.

For those of you who can't figure it out already, "lifestyle anarchists" are "primitivistic, prerational, anti-technological, petty-bourgeois, trendy, narcissistic, infantile, prelapsarian, aesthetic, elitist, reactionary." They are, accord-

ing to Bookchin logic, not at all interested in transforming a society based on a libertarian communist model, which Bookchin labels one of the four "basic tenets" of "traditional anarchism." (For this heresy Bookchin blasts Stirner as well.) It is important to point out that there are a great deal of people who are critical of Bookchin's views on anarchism (especially libertarian municipalism), who are not "primitivists," who are not "mystics," who are not "trendy." There are mystical communists, there are people who combine the ideas of Stirner with Kropotkin, or who come up with their own philosophies of anarchism, who do not deny the fact that they are products of society, who are not the "petty-bourgeois egoists" that the Soviets warned us about, who are interested in the struggle against capitalism in social relations between people, yet the fact that the great majority of anarchists develop their own unique synthesis of different ideas, based on empirical experience as well as what they've read, and cannot be neatly categorized into one of the two camps, is irrelevant for Bookchin's purposes. Like a true ideologue, things must be presented in absolutes to make a point. The fact that many anarchists, unlike Bookchin, are not interested in developing a dogmatic ideology or a political program can be partly attested to by the fact of the existence of Bookchin's book itself, published by AK Press. In an ironic ending, the back of the book lists present AK publications, with such diverse thinkers as Bookchin, Chomsky (whom Bookchin hates), the platformist Makhno, some "lifestyle" anarchists, Stewart Home (who hates Bakuninists), Crass, Guerin.... What does that mean, when a publishing group puts out books that are antithetical in ideas? It could mean that AK is a crass business venture, or that they don't read the books they publish, or that they don't understand the differences of opinions in their books, or that they just don't care because their own views are fluid and complex and they value some points of different writers, but not all points of any one. I don't know them and I can't say, but I wouldn't be surprised if the last possibility were the most accurate. Sometimes this means, as Bookchin alleges, that there is some contradiction and confusion in anarchist thought. True—many wildly contradict themselves, but this also attests to the fact that anarchism and rebellion have a rich and diverse history, that people are practicing the art of creative thought and don't swallow ideology like party hacks and rent-a-personality clones. It's stupid to think that just because somebody writes something that anarchists or radicals adopt those texts as canons and that people who are interested in transforming society become dissuaded by Zerzan, Bey, or L. Susan Brown. It is true that there are some brainless sheep out there that eat up and then spit out what they relate to aesthetically—but why should one be concerned with these people? It is significant that Bookchin casts most of his venom at the Bey, whom many half-witted schizophrenics appreciate for his attempts to create new identity labels; Hakim represents an alternative guru for the spiritually homeless and

has invaded Bookchin's turf for the conversion of the lambs. (In a way, Bookchin and Bey have some things in common: both are bourgeois old men hungry for affection who want to leave their mark on radical history before they croak. I think I'll live to see the day that both are devoid of their charm.) Despite the fact that the radical chic *du jour* is not what Bookchin claims can change society, this does not explain why all the anarchists who believe in organization, programs, communalism, and so on do not have a great impact on society and this despite the fact that they are actually, despite what Bookchin would have us believe, more numerous than the "lifestyle anarchists." (Although there are no statistics on this, I think it's true, but anybody stuck in a bohemian ghetto might not even know it—the same for anyone who sits home in Vermont and entertains scared white liberals.)

There have always been some radical heretics around the anarchist movement, but that never really stopped people from doing what they wanted, having organizational ideas. Did Stirner deter Bakunin from his organizational work? Was it the Russian masons and mystics around the old movement that deterred the other anarchists from making a social revolution? (Actually, after all the anarcho-communists were gone, they kept up the Kropotkin museum.) Did the kooky aesthetic anarchists in turn-of-the-century New York steer people away from their social ideals? True, nowadays, thanks to desktop and electronic publishing, more people will read the words of the marginals. And these words, apparently, have found an audience. I don't know how large that audience is. I don't know if there will be any great or lasting audience for anti-rationalistic ecstasism. Perhaps what Bookchin fears will come true—that "the revolutionary and social goals of anarchism are suffering far-reaching erosion to a point where the word anarchy will become part of the chic bourgeois vocabulary of the coming century—naughty, rebellious, insouciant, but deliciously safe." Of course society will try to destroy and co-opt everything in opposition to it.

Bookchin seems to think that many "lifestyle anarchists" would not offer opposition to capitalism, which is why the system can co-opt them. He goes on to label all lifestyle anarchists as bourgeois (as if Bakunin, Kropotkin, and he himself weren't) and suggest it is a safe guise for the bourgeois to play radical. There is some truth to this with some people. Still, I hardly think the corporate boardrooms are cowering in fear of Bookchin. This is the biggest hoot for anybody who has met any Bookchinites. Maybe I'm missing something, but there must be a reason that loads of people aren't rushing to Vermont to organize the social revolution with St. Murray. St. Murray leads us into making the following assumptions: that the times are egoistical, people are too stupid to see that they are social beings, and that those nasty lifestyle anarchists are steering the flock in the wrong direction. The fact is that many anarchists who are interested in social revolution and are not as sheepish as Bookchin imagines, don't like

Bookchin's visions of libertarian municipalism because it doesn't address the fact that society can be the agent of social repression of the will, and they do not believe in democracy as a goal.

We've all seen local citizen's groups acting out the most authoritarian forms of repression and although Bookchin fears that small minorities can tyrannize the majority by manipulating consensus (which sometimes does occur) majorities will eventually use their strength to squash minorities. Currently, many irrational, idiotic, brainwashed majorities are in fact oppressing minorities (in thought, lifestyle, nationality, gender, etc.) to which almost all anarchists (by the very fact of their ideas) belong. What Bookchin ignores is that few anarchists feel comfortable in society and that few would fit in like Bookchin (and that few would wear a tie on the cover of their books—except a few highly socialized easterners that I know, who, among other things get married, have kids, and in general live pretty much like all the other sheep around us). Real alienation from a seemingly ever more conservative society all contribute to people holding out more hope for union with like-minded individuals not with "society."

(One incident that testifies to the good will of the social revolutionary majorities is when one guy was visiting the Bookchinite holy grounds [note: the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont] and was accused, in truly hysterical, brainwashed, irrational fashion, of being a child molester for having different ideas than the rest of the wacky, hung-up society. Although he tried to explain his position, he was run out of town, showing just how the bogeymen in people's heads lead people to stupid, prejudiced action and infringe on the freedom of minorities.)

Bookchin's ideas are also not so attractive for people who are suspicious that such organizations as workers' committees, citizens' committees, and so on will become hierarchic organizations that mimic the state. But having such suspicions is not the same, as Bookchin seems to believe, as not realizing that one is a product of society or that society as a whole must be changed for people to be free.

Bookchin also seems to thrive in myth more than reality. According to him, anarchists of the past (part of Bookchin's nostalgic Left that Was) viewed anarcho-syndicalism as middle-class exotica and tried to form "energetic revolutionary forms of organization." Thus, in the '30s in Spain, anarchists were able to organize programs that even lifestyle anarchists like Hakim Bey could admire. However, much testifies to the fact that leftist ideas on the whole are in decline. Have the various types of socialists and communists out there also eschewed "any serious commitment to an organizational, programmatically coherent social confrontation with the existing order"? The answer is that they too suffer from the public feeling of powerlessness, which of course Bookchin admits is an important reason why discontent is not channeled. (As MB puts it, "even respectable forms of socialism are in pell-mell retreat")

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James Koehnline

The Revolution of Everyday Life

Chapter
23

by Raoul Vaneigem

T¹he construction of daily life implies the most thoroughgoing fusion of reason and passion. The mystery with which life has always been deliberately surrounded has as its main function the concealment of survival's basic triviality. The will to live entails the demand for some measure of organization. The attraction which the promise of a rich, multidimensional life has for each individual inevitably takes the form of a project governed in whole as in part by the very social power whose job it is to repress such desires. The oppression exercised by human government is essentially threefold: constraint, alienating mediation and magical seduction. The will to live also draws its vitality and its coherence from the unity of a threefold project: self-realization, communication and participation.

If human history was neither reduced to, nor dissociated from, the history of human survival, the dialectic of this threefold project, in conjunction with the dialectic of the productive forces, would prove sufficient explanation for most things men have done to themselves and to one another. Every riot, every revolution, reveals a passionate quest for exuberant life, for total clarity in human relations, for a collective form of transformation of the world.¹ Today one can see throughout history three fundamental passions related to life in the same way that the need to eat and the need to find shelter are related to survival. The desire to create, the desire to love and the desire to play interact with the need to eat and the need to find shelter, just as the will to live never ceases to play havoc with the necessity of surviving. Obviously, the importance of the part played by each element changes from one time to another, but today their whole impor-

The Unitary Triad: Self-Realization, Communication, Participation

The repressive unity of Power is threefold: constraint, seduction and mediation are its three functions. This unity is merely the reflection of an equally tripartite, unitary project, its form inverted and perverted by the techniques of dissociation. In its chaotic, underground development, the new society tends to find practical expression as a transparency in human relationships which promotes the participation of everyone in the self-realization of everyone else. Creativity, love and play are to life what the needs for nourishment and shelter are to survival (1). The project of self-realization is grounded in the passion to create (2); the project of communication is grounded in the passion of love (4); the project of participation is grounded in the passion for play (6). Wherever these three projects are separated, Power's repressive unity is reinforced. Radical subjectivity is the pressure—discernible in practically everyone at the present time—of an indivisible will to build a passion-filled life (3). The erotic is the spontaneous coherence which gives practical unity to attempts to enrich lived experience (5).

tance lies in the extent to which they can be unified.

Every riot, every revolution, reveals a passionate quest for exuberant life, for total clarity in human relations, for a collective form of transformation of the world.

Today, with the welfare state, the question of survival has become only a part of the whole problem of life, as I hope to have shown. Life-economy has gradually absorbed survival-economy,

and in this context the dissociation of the three projects, and of the passion underlying them, appears more and more clearly as the consequence of a fundamentally erroneous distinction between life and survival. However, since the whole of existence is torn between two perspectives—that of separation, of Power, and that of revolution, of unity—and is therefore essentially ambiguous, I am forced to discuss each project at once separately and unitarily.

* * *

The project of self-realization is born of the passion for creation, in the moment when subjectivity wells up and aspires to reign universally. The project

of communication is born of the passion of love, whenever people discover in one another the self-same desire for amorous conquest. The project of participation is born of the passion for playing, whenever group activity facilitates the self-realization of each individual.

Isolated, the three passions are perverted. Dissociated, the three projects are falsified. The will to self-realization is turned into the will to power; sacrificed to status and role-playing, it reigns in a world of restrictions and illusions. The will to communication becomes objective dishonesty; based on relationships between objects, it provides the semiologists with signs to dress up in human guise. The will to participation serves to organize the loneliness of everyone in the lonely crowd; it creates the tyranny of the illusion of community.

Once cut off from the others, any of these passions may be incorporated as an absolute into a metaphysical vision which renders it inaccessible. Our philosophers will have their little joke: first they turn off the main switch, then they say the power has failed. Thus full self-realization becomes a chimera, unobfuscated communication becomes a pipe dream, and the idea of social harmony becomes a passing fad. True enough, so long as separation is the order of the day, everyone is confronted by impossibilities. The Cartesian mania for cutting everything up into little pieces, and for proceeding only one step at a time, necessarily produces an incomplete and crippled reality. No wonder that the armies of Order must be recruited from the ranks of the halt and the lame.

2

The project of self-realization

The guarantee of material security leaves unused a large supply of energy formerly expended in the struggle for survival. The will to power tries to recuperate, for the reinforcement

of hierarchical slavery, this free-floating energy which should serve the blossoming of individual life (a). Universal oppression forces almost everyone to withdraw strategically towards what they feel to be their only uncontaminated possession: their subjectivity. The revolution of everyday life must create practical forms for the countless attacks on the outside world launched daily by subjectivity (b).

a) The historic phase of privative appropriation stopped man becoming the demiurge he was forced to recreate

The state superman is the strength of the weak. This is why the demands of an isolated individual can always fit in with a role played impeccably in the official spectacle. The will to power is an exhibitionistic will. The isolated individual detests other people, feels contempt for the masses of which he is a perfect specimen himself. He is, in fact, the most contemptible man of all. Showing off, amidst the crassest sort of illusory community, is his "dynamism"; the rat-race is the perfect arena for him to display his "love of danger." The manager, the leader, the tough guy, the mobster know little joy. Ability to endure is his main qualification. His ethic is that of the pioneer, the spy, the scout: they are shock-troops of conformity.

in ideal form in order to compensate for his real failure. At heart everyone wants to be God, but up to now this desire has been turned against humanity itself. I have shown how hierarchical social organization builds the world up by breaking men down; how the perfection of its structure and machinery makes it function like a giant computer whose programmers are also programmed; how the cybernetic state is the coldest of all cold monsters [see Part one: The Perspective of Power, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*].

In these conditions, the struggle for enough to eat, for comfort, for stable employment and for security are, on the social front, so many

aggressive raids which are slowly but surely becoming rear-guard actions, their very real importance notwithstanding. The struggle for survival took up and still takes up an energy and creativity which are destined to fall on the welfare state like a pack of ravening wolves. Despite false conflicts and illusory activities, a constantly stimulated creative energy is no longer being absorbed fast enough by consumer society. What will happen to this vitality suddenly at a loose end, to this surplus virility which neither coercion nor lies can really continue to handle? No longer recuperated by

artistic and cultural consumption—by the ideological spectacle—creativity will turn spontaneously against the conditions of survival itself.

Rebels have nothing to lose but their survival. But there are two ways of losing it: by giving up life or by seeking to construct it. Since survival is simply to die very slowly, there is a temptation, containing a very great deal of genuine feeling, to speed the whole thing up and die as fast as possible. To "live" the negation of survival negatively. On the other hand, one can try and survive as an anti-survivor, focusing all one's energy on the enrichment of daily life. Survival can be negated through incorporation into joyous constructive activity. Both solutions further the unitary yet contradictory tendency of the dialectic of decomposition and transcendence.

Self-realization cannot be divorced from transcendence. No matter how ferocious, the rebellion of

desperation remains prisoner to the authoritarian dilemma: survival or death. The half-rebellion, this savage creativity, so easily broken in by the order of things, is the will to power.

The will to power is the project of self-realization falsified—divorced from communication and participation. It is the passion for creation, for self-creation, caught up in the hierarchical system, condemned to turn the mill of repression and appearances. Prestige and humiliation, authority and submission: the only music to which the will to power can dance. The hero sacrifices to the power of his role and his rifle. And

when, finally, he's burnt out, he follows Voltaire's advice and cultivates his garden. Meantime his mediocrity becomes a model for the common run of mortals.

The hero, the ruler, the superstar, the millionaire, the expert...how often have they sold out all they held most dear? How many sacrifices have they made to force a few people, or a few million (people they have to regard as complete idiots) to put their photograph on the wall, to remember their name, to stare at them in the street.

All the same, the will to power does contain traces of an authentic will to live. Think of the *virtù* of the *condottiere*, of the exuberance of the Titans of the Renaissance. But the *condottiere* are all dead and buried. All we have left are industrial magnates, gangsters and hired guns, dealers in art and artillery. The adventurer and the explorer are comic-strip characters. And with these people Zarathustra dreamt of peopling the heights of Sils-Maria; in these abortions he thought he could see the adumbration of a future race! Nietzsche is, in fact, the last master, crucified by his own illusions. His death was a replay, with more brio and more wit, of the comedy of Golgotha. It explains the disappearance of God. Nietzsche may have had a refined sensibility but the stench of Christianity didn't stop him breathing it in by the lungful. And he pretends not to understand that Christianity, however much contempt it may have poured on the will to power, is in fact its best means of protection, its most faithful bodyguard, since it stands in the way of the appearance of masters without slaves. Nietzsche thus blessed a world in which the will to live is condemned never to be more than the will to power. His last letters were signed "Dionysus the Crucified": he too was looking for a master, someone to blame for his self-immolation. Meddling with the witch doctor of Bethlehem is a

dangerous business.

Nazism is Nietzschean logic called to order by history. The question was: what can become of those who would be masters in society from which all true masters have disappeared? And the answer: a super-slave. Even Nietzsche's concept of the superman, however threadbare it may have been, is worlds away from what we know of the domestics who ran the Third Reich.

The most recent examples of city planning simply have no center at all. It's becoming increasingly obvious: the reference point they propose is always somewhere else. These are labyrinths in which you are only allowed to lose yourself. No games. No meetings. No living. A desert of plateglass. A grid of roads. High-rise flats. Oppression is no longer centralized because oppression is everywhere. The positive aspect of this: everyone begins to see, in conditions of almost total isolation, that first and foremost it is they themselves that they have to save, they themselves that they have to choose as the center, their own subjectivity out of which they have to build a world where everyone will feel at home.

Fascism knows only one superman: the state.

The state superman is the strength of the weak. This is why the demands of an isolated individual can always fit in with a role played impeccably in the official spectacle. The will to power is an exhibitionistic will. The isolated individual detests other people, feels contempt for the masses of which he is a perfect specimen himself. He is, in fact, the most contemptible man of all. Showing off, amidst the crassest sort of illusory community, is his "dynamism"; the rat-race is the perfect arena for him to display his "love of danger." The

manager, the leader, the tough guy, the mobster know little joy. Ability to endure is his main qualification. His ethic is that of the pioneer, the spy, the scout: they are shock-troops of conformity. "No animal would have done what I have done...." A will to *appear* since one cannot *be*: a way of escaping the emptiness of one's own existence by proclaiming one's existence ever more noisily. But only servants are proud of their sacrifices. The sovereignty of things is absolute here: now the artificiality of the role, now the "authenticity" of an animal. Only animals can do what a human being would refuse to do. The heroes who march past, colors flying—the Red Army, the SS, the French *paras*—these are the same people who burnt and cut living flesh in Budapest, Warsaw, Algiers. The discipline of armies has no other content than the canine savagery of the new recruit; the only thing a cop learns is when to snarl and when to fawn.

The will to power is a compensation for slavery. At the same time it is a hatred of slavery. The great men of the past never identified themselves with a Cause. They just used Causes to further their own personal hunger for power. But as great Causes began to break up and disappear, so did the ambitious individuals concerned. However, the game

goes on. People rely on Causes because they haven't been able to make their own life a Cause sufficient unto itself. Through the Cause and the sacrifice it entails they stagger along, backwards, in search of their own will to live.

Sometimes desire for freedom and for play breaks out among law and order's conscripts. Think of Salvatore Guillianio, before he was co-opted by the landowners, of Billy the Kid, of various gangsters momentarily close to the anarchist terrorists. Legionnaires and mercenaries have defected to the side of the Algerian or Congolese rebels, thus choosing the party of open

insurrection and taking their desire to play to its logical conclusion: the breaking of all taboos and the aspiration to complete freedom.

Teenage gangs also come to mind. The very childishness of their will to power has often kept their will to live almost uncontaminated. Obviously, the delinquent is always liable to be co-opted. First, as consumer, because he wants things he cannot afford to buy; then as he gets older, as a producer. But, within the gang, playing remains of such great importance that a real revolutionary consciousness is always a possible outcome. If the violence of teenage gangs were not squandered in exhibitionistic and generally half-baked rumbles, and aspired instead to the real poetry which is to be found in a riot, then this game-playing could easily set off a chain reaction: a qualitative flash. Almost everyone is sick of the lies they are fed all day long. All that's needed is a spark—plus tactics. Should delinquents arrive at revolutionary consciousness simply through understanding what they already are, and by wanting to be more so, they could quite conceivably become the catalyst of a widescale reversal of perspective. The federation of such gangs would amount to a first manifestation of that consciousness, and a precondition of its existence.

b) So far the heart of life has been sought anywhere but in the heart of man. Creativity has always been pushed to one side, suburbanized. Indeed the history of cities is a very accurate reflection of the vicissitudes of the axis around which life has been organized for thousands of years. The first cities grew up around a stronghold or sacred spot, a temple or a church, a point where heaven and earth converged. Industrial towns, with their mean, dark streets, surround a factory or industrial plant; administrative centers preside over empty rectilinear avenues. Finally, the most recent examples of city planning simply have no center at all. It's becoming increasingly obvious: the reference point they propose is *always somewhere else*. These are labyrinths in which you are only allowed to lose yourself. No games. No meetings. No living. A desert of plateglass. A grid of roads. High-rise flats. Oppression is no longer centralized because oppression is everywhere. The positive aspect of this:

everyone begins to see, in conditions of almost total isolation, that first and foremost it is they themselves that they have to save, they themselves that they have to choose as the center, their own subjectivity out of which they have to build a world where *everyone* will feel at home.

The only way of retrieving everyone's truth, the true roots of the social, is to retrieve a clear consciousness of oneself. As long as individual creativity is not the center of social life, man's only freedom will be freedom to destroy and be destroyed. If you do other people's thinking for them, they will do your thinking for you. And he who thinks for you judges you; he reduces you to his own norm; and, whatever his intentions may be, he will end by making you stupid—for stupidity doesn't come from a lack of intelligence, as stupid people imagine, it comes from renouncing, from abandoning one's own true self. So if anyone asks you what you're doing, asks you to explain yourself, treat him as a judge—that is to say, as an enemy.

"I want someone to succeed me; I want children; I want disciples; I want a father; I don't want myself." A few words from those high on Christianity, whether the Roman or the Peking brand. Only unhappiness and neurosis can follow. My subjectivity is too important for me to take my lack of inhibition to the point of either asking other people for their help or of refusing it when it is offered. The point is neither to lose oneself in oneself nor to lose oneself in other people. Anyone who realizes that his problems are ultimately social in nature must first of all find himself. Otherwise he will find nothing in other people, save the negation of himself.

Nothing is more difficult, or more painful, to approach than the question of one's own self-regeneration. In the heart of each human being there is a hidden room, a *camera obscura*, to which only the mind and dreams can find the door. A magic circle in which the world and the self are reconciled, where every childish wish comes true. The passions flower there, brilliant, poisonous blossoms cling to and thriving on air, thin air. I create a universe for myself and, like some fantastic tyrannical god, people it with beings who will never live for anyone else.

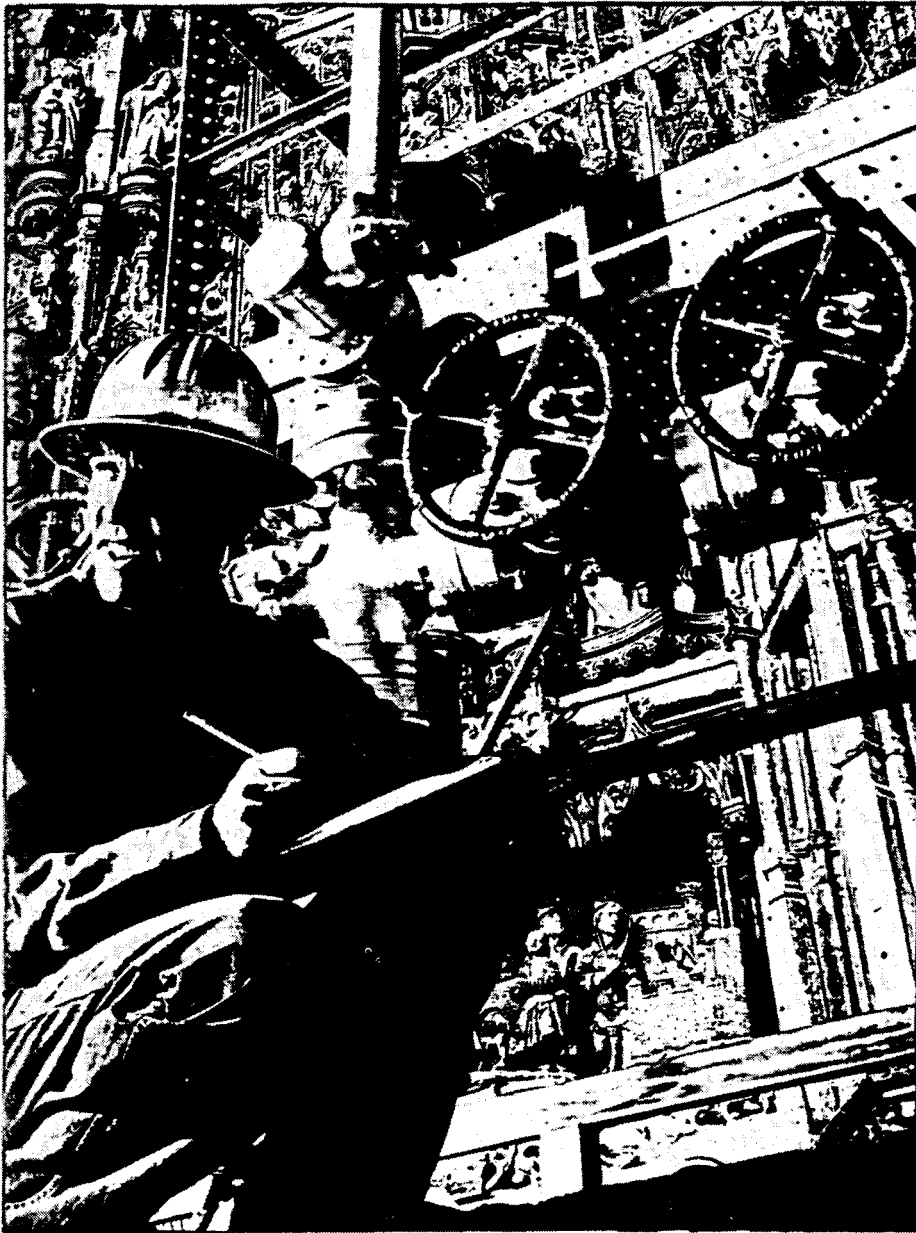
One of my favorite James Thurber stories is the one where Walter Mitty dreams that he is a swashbuckling captain, then an eminent surgeon, then a cold-blooded killer, and finally a war hero. All this as he drives his old Buick downtown to buy some dog biscuits.

The real importance of subjectivity can easily be measured by the general embarrassment with which it is approached. Everyone wants to pass it off as their mind "wandering," as "introversion," as "being stoned." Everyone censors their own daydreams. But isn't it the phantoms and visions of the mind that have dealt the most deadly blows to morality, authority, language and our collective hypnotic sleep? Isn't a fertile imagination the source of all creativity, the alembic distilling the quick of life: the bridgehead driven into the old world across which the coming invasions will pour?

Anyone who can be open minded about their interior life will begin to see a different world outside themselves: values change, things lose their glamour and become plain instruments. In the magic of the imaginary, things exist only to be picked up and toyed with, caressed, broken apart and put together again in any way one sees fit. Once the prime importance of subjectivity is accepted the spell things cast upon us is broken. Starting from other people, one's self-pursuit is fruitless; one repeats the same futile gestures time after time. Starting from oneself, on the contrary, gestures are not repeated but taken back into oneself, corrected and realized in a more highly evolved form.

Daydreaming could become the most powerful dynamo in the world. Just as it makes utopias possible, modern technological expertise also does away with the purely fairytale nature of dreams. All my wishes can come true—from the moment that modern technology is put at their service.

And in the immediate, even deprived of these techniques, can subjectivity ever stray far from the truth? It is possible for me to objectify all that I have dreamt of being. Everyone, at least once in his life, has pulled off the same sort of thing as Lassailly or Nechaev; Lassailly, passing himself off as the author of an unwritten book, ends up by becoming a real writer, author of the *Roueries de Triumph*; Nechaev, touching Bakunin for money in the name of a



James Koehnline

non-existent terrorist organization, finally does get a real group of nihilists going. One day I must be as I have wanted to seem; the particular spectacular role I have so long wanted to be will become genuine. Thus subjectivity subverts roles and spectacular lies to its own ends: it reinvests appearance in reality.

Subjective imagination is not purely mental: it is always seeking its practical realization. There can be no doubt that the artistic spectacle—and above all its narrative forms—plays on subjectivity's quest for self-realization, but solely by captivating it, by making it function in terms of passive identification. Debord's propaganda-film *Critique de la Séparation* stresses the point: "Normal-

ly, the things that happen to us, the things which really succeed in catching our attention and soliciting out genuine involvement are the very things that ought to leave us cold and distant spectators. One the other hand, artistic transposition has the capacity to dull our perception of situations which should attract us, and engage our participation. This paradox must be turned upside down—put back on its feet." The forces of the artistic spectacle must be dissolved so that their equipment can pass into the arsenal of individual dreams. Once they are thus armed, there will be no question of treating them as fantasies. This is the only sense in which the problem of the realization of art arises.

3

Radical Subjectivity

Each subjectivity is unique, but all obey the same will to self-realization. The problem is one of setting their variety in a common direction, of creating a united front of subjectivity. Any attempt to build a new society is subject to two conditions: first, that the realization of each individual subjectivity will either take place in a collective form or it will not take place at all; and, second, that, "To tell the truth, the only reason anyone fights is for what they love. Fighting for everyone else is only the consequence" (Saint-Just).

My subjectivity feeds on events. The most varied events: a riot, a sexual fiasco, a meeting, a memory, a rotten tooth. The shock waves of reality in the making reverberate through the caverns of subjectivity. I am caught up in these oscillations whether I like it or not, and, though not everything affects me with equal force, I am always faced with the same paradox: no sooner do I become aware of the alchemy worked by my imagination upon reality than I see that reality reclaimed and borne away by the uncontrollable river of things. A bridge has to be built between the work of the imagination and the objective world. Only radical theory can confer on the individual inalienable rights over his surroundings and circumstances. Radical theory grasps the individual at the roots—and the roots of the individual lie in his subjectivity, in that soil which he possesses in common with all other individuals.

You can't make it on your own. But can any individual—any individual who has got anything at all straight about himself and the world—fail to see a will identical to his own in everyone he knows: the same search, the same starting points?

All forms of hierarchical power differ from one another, yet all perform identical oppressive functions. Similarly, all subjectivities are different, but all contain an identical desire for complete self-realization. This is the sense in which we speak of "radical subjectivity."

Each individual subjectivity is rooted in the will to realize oneself by transforming the world, the will to live every sensation, every experience, every possibility to the full. It can be seen in everyone, its intensity varying according to the degree of consciousness and determination. Its real power depends on the level of collective unity it can attain without losing its variety. Con-

sciousness of this necessary unity comes from what one could call a *reflex of identity*—a diametrically opposite movement to that of identification. Through identification we lose our own uniqueness in the multiplicity of roles; through the reflex of identity we strengthen the wealth of our individual possibilities in the unity of federated subjectivities.

Radical subjectivity is founded on the reflex of identity, on the individual's constant quest for himself *in others*. "While I was on a mission in the state of Tchou," says Confucius, "I saw some piglets sucking on their dead mother. After a short while they shuddered and went away. They had sensed that she could no longer see them and that she *wasn't like them any more*. What they loved in their mother was not her body, but whatever it was that made her body live." Likewise, what I look for in other people is the richest part of myself hidden within them. Is the reflex of identity bound to spread? Not necessarily. But present-day historical conditions certainly favor such a development.

No one has ever questioned the interest people take in being fed, sheltered, cared for, protected from hardship and disaster. The imperfections of technology—transformed at a very early date into social imperfections—have postponed the satisfaction of these universal desires. Today, a planned economy allows us to foresee the final solution of the problems of survival. Now that the needs of survival are well on the way to being satisfied, at least in the hyper-industrialized countries, it is becoming painfully obvious that there are also human passions which must be satisfied, that the satisfaction of these passions is of vital importance to everyone and, furthermore, that failure to satisfy them will undermine, if not destroy, all our acquisitions in the realm of material survival. As the problems of survival are slowly but surely resolved, they clash more and more brutally with the prob-

lems of life, which, just as slowly and just as surely, are sacrificed to the needs of survival. In a way, this simplifies matters: it is now obvious that socialist-type planning is incompatible with the true harmonization of life in common.

Radical subjectivity is the common front of identity rediscovered. Those who cannot see themselves in other

"I want to be myself. I want to walk without impediment. I want to affirm myself alone in my freedom. May everyone do likewise. The fate of revolution need not concern us: it will be safer in the hands of everyone than in the hands of parties." So said Coeurderoy...Nothing gives me the right to speak in the name of other people. I am my own delegate. Yet at the same time I can't help thinking that my life is not of concern to me alone, but that I serve the interests of thousands of other people by living the way I live, and by struggling to live more intensely and more freely. My friends and I are one, and we know it. Each of us is acting for each other by acting for himself. Honesty is the only way to true participation.

people are condemned for ever to be strangers to themselves. I can do nothing for other people if they can do nothing for themselves. This is the context in which we should re-examine such words as "knowledge," "recognition," "good guy," "supporter."

Knowledge is only of value if it leads to the recognition of a common project—to the reflex of identity. True self-realization calls for a good deal of knowledge of various kinds but much knowledge is worthless if it is not placed in the service of self-realization. As the first years of the Situationist International have shown, the main enemies of a coherent revolutionary group are those closest to that group in

knowledge and furthest away from it in lived experience and in the sense they give it. In the same way "supporters" who identify with the group become an obstacle in its path. They understand everything except what is really at stake. They seek knowledge because they are incapable of seeking themselves.

By grasping myself, I break other people's hold over me. Thus I let them see themselves in me. No one can develop in freedom without spreading freedom in the world.

"I want to be myself. I want to walk without impediment. I want to affirm myself alone in my freedom. May everyone do likewise. The fate of revolution need not concern us: it will be safer in the hands of everyone than in the hands of parties." So said Coeurderoy. I agree one hundred percent. Nothing gives me the right to speak in the name of other people. I am my own delegate. Yet at the same time I can't help thinking that my life is not of concern to me alone, but that I serve the interests of thousands of other people by living the way I live, and by struggling to live more intensely and more freely. My friends and I are one, and we know it. Each of us is acting for each other by acting for himself. Honesty is the only way to true participation.

4

The Project of Communication

Love offers the purest glimpse of true communication that any of us have had. But as communication in general tends to break down love becomes increasingly precarious. Everything tends to reduce lovers to objects. Real meetings are replaced by mechanical sex: by the posturing of countless *Playboys* and *Bunnies*. True love is revolutionary praxis or it is nothing.

Although the three passions underlying the threefold project of self-realization, communication and participation are equally important, they are not equally repressed. While creativity and

play have been blighted by prohibitions and by every sort of distortion, love, without escaping from repression, still remains relatively the freest and most easily accessible experience. The most democratic, so to speak.

Love offers the model of perfect communication: the orgasm, the total fusion of two separate beings. It is a glimpse of a transformed universe. Its intensity, its here-and-nowness, its physical exaltation, its emotional fluidity, its eager acceptance of precariousness, of change: everything indicates that love will prove the key factor in recreating the world. Our emotionally dead survival cries out for multidimensional passions. Lovemaking sums up and distills both the desire for, and the reality of, such a life. The universe lovers build of dreams and of one another's bodies is a transparent universe; lovers want to be at home everywhere.

Love has been able to stay free more successfully than the other passions. Creativity and play have always "been granted" an official representation, a spectacular acknowledgement which did its best to cut them off at the source. Love has always been clandestine—"being alone together." It was lucky enough to be protected by the bourgeois concept of private life: banished from the day (reserved for work and consumption), it found refuge in the night's shadows, lit only by the moon. Thus it partly escaped the mopping-up operations to which daytime activities were subjected. The same cannot be said for communication. And now the ashes of false daytime communication are threatening to stifle even this spark of nocturnal passion. Consumer society is extending falsification further and further into the reaches of the night, where the simplest gestures of love are contaminated by its logic.

People who talk about "communication" when there are only things and their mechanical relations are working on the side of the process of reification that they pretend to attack. "Understanding," "friendship," "being happy together"—so much bullshit. All I can see is exploiters and exploited, rulers and ruled, actors and spectators. And all of them flailed like chaff by Power.

Things aren't necessarily expressionless. Anything can become human if someone infuses it with his own subjectivity. But in a world ruled by private

appropriation, the object's only function is to justify its proprietor. If my subjectivity overflows, if my eyes make the landscape their own, it can only be ideally, without material or legal consequences. In the perspective of power, people and things are not there for my enjoyment, but to serve a master; nothing really is, everything is a function of an order based on property.

There cannot be any real communication in a world where almost everything one does is ruled by fetishes. The space between people and things is empty: is packed with alienating mediations. And as power becomes increasingly abstract its own signals become so numerous, so chaotic, as to demand systematic interpretation on the part of a body of scribes, semanticists, and mythologists. Trained to see only objects around him, the proprietor needs objective and objectified servants. Only subjective truth, reinforced by historical conditions, can resist their machinations. The only way to counter the deeper thrusts of oppression is by taking immediate experience as Base One.

* * *

The main pleasure of the bourgeoisie seems to have been to degrade pleasure in all its forms. Not content with imprisoning people's freedom to love in the squalid *ownership* of marriage (interlarded of course with the occasional one-night stand), not content with setting things up so that deception and jealousy were bound to follow, this class has finally succeeded in separating lovers at the most basic level, within the physical act of love itself.

Love's despair doesn't come from sexual frustration. It comes from suddenly losing contact with the person in your arms; of both of you suddenly seeing one another as objects. Swedish social democracy, as everyone knows, has already marketed a form of manipulated and hygienic sex under the brand name of "free love."

But in the end the disgust aroused by this world of inauthenticity revives an insatiable desire for human contact. Love, it seems at times, is our only break. Sometimes I think that nothing else is as real, nothing else is as human, as the feel of a woman's body, the softness of her skin, the warmth of her cunt. That even if this is all there is, it

opens the door to a totality that even eternal life could not exhaust....

And then, even during really magical moments, the inert mass of objects suddenly becomes magnetic. The passivity of a lovers unravels the bonds which were being woven; the dialogue is interrupted before it is really begun. Love's dialectic freezes. Two statues are left lying side by side. Two objects.

Although love is always born of subjectivity—a woman is beautiful because I love her—my desire cannot stop itself objectifying what it wants. Desire always makes an object of the loved person. But if I let my desire transform the loved person into an object, have I not condemned myself to conflict with this object and, through force of habit, to become detached from it?

What can ensure perfect communication between lovers? The union of these opposites:

—the more I detach myself from the object of my desire and the more objective strength I give to my desire, the more carefree my desire becomes towards its object.

—the more I detach myself from my desire, insofar as it is an object, and the more objective strength I give to the object of my desire, the more my desire finds its *raison d'être* in the loved person.

Socially, this playing with one's own attitudes can be expressed by changing partners at the same time as one is attached more or less permanently to a "pivotal" partner. All these encounters would be the communication of a single formulation endorsed by both partners. I have always wanted to be able to say: "I know you don't love me because you only love yourself. I am just the same. So love me."

Love can only be based on radical subjectivity. The time is up for all self-sacrificial forms of love. To love only oneself through other people, to be loved by others through the love they owe themselves. This is what the passion of love teaches; these are the only conditions of authentic communication.

* * *

And love is also an adventure—a search for a Northwest Passage out of inauthenticity. To approach someone in any spectacular, exhibitionistic way is to condemn oneself to a reified relation-

ship from the very first. The choice is between spectacular seduction—that of the playboy—and the seduction exercised by something that is qualitatively different—the person who is seductive because he isn't trying to seduce.

Sade describes two possible attitudes. On the one hand, the libertines of the *120 Days of Sodom* who can only really enjoy themselves by torturing to death the object they have seduced (and what more fitting homage to a thing than to make it suffer). On the other hand, the libertines of *Philosophy in the Boudoir*, warm and playful, who do all they can to increase one another's pleasure. The former are the masters of old, vibrant with hatred and revolt; the latter are masters without slaves, discovering in one another only the reflection of their own pleasure.

Present-day seduction is sadistic in that the seducer refuses to forgive the desired person for being an object. Truly seductive people, on the contrary, contain the fullness of desire in themselves; they refuse to play a part and owe their seductiveness to this refusal. In Sade this would be Dolmancé, Eugénie or Madame de Saint-Ange. This plenitude can only exist for the desired person, however, if he recognizes his own will to live in the person who attracts him because he embodies it. Real seductiveness seduces only by its honesty. And not everyone is worth seducing. This is what Schweidnitz's *Béguines* and their thirteenth-century companions meant by saying that resistance to sexual advances was the sign of a crass spirit. The Brethren of the Free Spirit expressed the same idea. "Anyone who knows the God inhabiting him carries his own Heaven within himself. By the same token, ignorance of one's own divinity really is a mortal sin. This is the meaning of the Hell which one carries with oneself in earthly life."

Hell is the emptiness left by separation, the anguish of lovers lying side by side without being together. Non-communication is always like the collapse of a revolutionary movement. The will to

death reigns wherever the will to life has been defeated.

* * *

Love must be freed from its myths, from its images, from its spectacular categories; its authenticity must be strengthened and its spontaneity renewed. There is no other way of fighting its reification and its recuperation

By throwing the whole of everyday life onto the battlefield of production and consumption, capitalism crushes the urge to play while at the same time trying the harness it as a source of profit. So, over the last few decades, we have seen the attraction of the unknown turned into mass tourism, adventure turned into scientific expeditions, the great game of war turned into operational strategy, and the taste for change turned into mere changes in taste.

in the spectacle. Love cannot survive either isolation or fragmentation; it is bound to overflow into the will to transform the whole of human activity, into the necessity of building a world where lovers feel themselves to be everywhere free.

The birth and the dissolution of the moment of love are bound up with the dialectic of memory and desire. During the *inception* of this moment, the present desire and the memory of the earliest satisfied desires (involving no resistance on the part of the parent) tend to reinforce one another. In the *moment* itself, memory and desire coincide: the moment of love is a space-time of authentic lived experience, a present embracing both the memory of the past and the taut bow of desire aimed at the future. At the stage of *breaking-up*, the memory prolongs the impassioned moment but desire gradually ebbs away. The present disintegrates, memory turns nostalgically towards past happiness, while desire foresees the unhappiness to come. With *dissolution* the sepa-

ration becomes real. The failure of the recent past cannot be forgotten and desire finally expires.

In love, as in every attempt to communicate, the problem is avoiding the stage of breaking up. One could suggest:

—developing the moment of love as far as one can, in as many directions as possible; in other words, refusing to dissociate it from either creativity or play, promoting it from the rank of a moment to that of the real construction of a situation;

—encouraging collective experiments in individual self-realization; multiplying the possibilities of sexual attraction by bringing together a great variety of possible partners;

—permanently strengthening the pleasure-principle, which is the life-blood of every attempt to realize oneself, to communicate or to participate. Pleasure is the principle of unification; love is the desire for unity in a common *moment*; friendship, desire for unity in a common project.

5

The Erotic or the Dialectic of Pleasure

There is no pleasure that does not seek its own coherence. Its interruption, its lack of satisfaction, causes a disturbance analogous to Reichian "stasis." Oppression by Power keeps human beings in a state of permanent crisis. Thus the function of pleasure, as one of the anxiety born of its absence, is essentially a social function. The erotic is the development of the passions as they become unitary, a game of unity and variety without which revolutionary coherence cannot exist ("Boredom is always counterrevolutionary").

Wilhelm Reich attributes most neurotic behavior to disturbances of the orgasm, to what he called "orgasmic impotence." He maintains that anxiety is created by inability to experience a complete orgasm, by a sexual discharge which fails to liquidate all the excitation mobilized by preliminary sexual activity. The accumulated and unspent energy becomes free-floating and is converted into anxiety. Anxiety in its turn still further impedes future orgasmic potency.

But the problem of tensions and their liquidation does not exist solely on the

level of sexuality. It characterizes all human relationships. And Reich, although he sensed that this was so, failed to emphasize strongly enough that the present social crisis is also a crisis of an orgasmic kind. If it is true that "The energy source of neurosis lies in the disparity between the accumulation and the discharge of sexual energy," it seems to me that such neurotic energy also derives from the disparity between accumulation and the discharge of the energy set in motion by human relationships. Total enjoyment is still possible in the moment of love, but as soon as one tries to prolong this moment, to extend it into social life itself, one cannot avoid what Reich called "stasis." The world of dissatisfaction and non-consummation is a world of permanent crisis. What would a society without neurosis be like? An endless banquet, with pleasure as the only yardstick.

* * *

"Everything is feminine in what one loves," wrote La Mettrie. "The empire of love recognizes no other frontiers than those of pleasure." But pleasure in general recognizes no frontiers. Pleasure which does not increase evaporates. Repetition kills; it is inseparable from the totality.

The erotic is pleasure in search of coherence. The development of passions becoming communicative, interdependent, unitary. The problem is the recreation of social life of that state of total enjoyment known in the moment of love. The establishment of the preconditions for playing with the one and the many, that is to say, for the individual's free and transparent participation in the quest for collective gratification.

Freud defined the goal of Eros as unification, Eros is essentially narcissistic and in love with itself. It wants a world to love as much as it loves itself. Norman O. Brown, in *Life Against Death*, points out the contradiction. How, he asks, can a narcissistic orientation lead to union with beings in the

world? "In love, the abstract antinomy of the Ego and the Other can be transcended if we return to the concrete reality of pleasure, to a definition of sexuality as being essentially a pleasurable activity of the body, and if we see love as the relationship between the Ego and the sources of pleasure." To be more exact, the source of pleasure lies less in the body than in the possibility of freedom to unite oneself with

Contemporary society has banned all real play. Play has become something for children only. (And even children are getting more and more pacifying, gadget-type toys rammed down their throats.) The adult is only allowed falsified and co-opted forms of play: competitions, TV games, elections, casino gambling.... Yet it is obvious that this kind of rubbish can never satisfy something as strong as people's desire to play—especially today, when game-playing could flourish as never before in history.

anyone who allows one to become united with oneself. The realization of pleasure passes via the pleasure of realization, the pleasure of communication via the communication of pleasure, participation in pleasure via the pleasure of participation. It is because of this that narcissism turned towards the outside world, the narcissism Brown is talking about, can only lead to a wholesale demolition of social structures.

The more intense pleasure becomes the more it demands the whole world. "Lovers, give one another greater and greater pleasure," said Breton. A truly revolutionary slogan.

Western civilization is a civilization of work and, as Diogenes observed, "Love is the occupation of the unoccupied." With the gradual disappearance of forced labor, love is destined to retrieve all the ground it has lost. It already poses a direct threat to every kind of authority. Because the erotic is unitary, it is also acceptance of variety. Free-

dom knows no propaganda more effective than people calmly enjoying themselves. Which is why pleasure, for the most part, is forced to be clandestine, love locked away in a bedroom, creativity confined to the backstairs of culture, and why alcohol and drugs cower under the shadow of the outstretched arm of the law.

The ethics of survival condemns the diversity of pleasures and their union-in-variety the better to promote obsessive repetition. But if pleasure-anxiety is satisfied with the repetitive, true pleasure can only occur thanks to diversity-in-unity. Clearly the simplest model of the erotic is the pivotal couple. Two people live their experiences as transparently and as freely as possible. This radiant complicity has all the charm of incest. Their wealth of common experiences can only lead to a brother-and-sister relationship. Great loves have always had something incestuous about them, a fact which suggests that love between brothers and sisters was privileged from the very first, and that it should be encouraged in

every way. It is high time that this ancient and silly taboo was broken, and a process of "sororization" set in train: I would like to have a wife-cum-sister, all of whose friends were also my wives and sisters.

In the erotic realm there is no perversion apart from the negation of pleasure; its distortion into pleasure-anxiety. What matters the spring so long as the water runs? As the Chinese say: immobile in one another, we are borne along by pleasure.

Finally, the search for pleasure ensures the survival of the principle of play. It ensures real participation, protecting it against self-sacrifice, coercion and lies. The actual degree of intensity pleasure reaches is the measure of subjectivity's grasp on the world. Thus caprice is playing with desire *in statu nascendi*; desire, playing with passion *in statu nascendi*. And playing with passion finds its coherent expression in the poetry of revolution.

Does this mean that the search for pleasure is incompatible with pain? Not at all—but pain has to be given a new meaning. Pleasure-anxiety is neither pleasure nor pain; it's just scratching yourself and letting the itch get worse and worse. What is real pain? A setback in the game of desire or passion; a positive pain crying out with a corresponding degree of passion for another pleasure to construct.

6

The Project of Participation

A society based on organized survival can tolerate only false, spectacular forms of play. But with the crisis of the spectacle, playfulness, which had been hounded almost out of existence, tends to re-emerge on all sides. It is now taking the form of social upheaval and already adumbrates, over and above this negative aspect, the future society based on true participation. The praxis of play implies the refusal of leaders, of sacrifice, of roles, freedom for everyone to realize himself, and transparency in all social relationships (a). Tactics are the polemical stage of the game. Individual creativity needs an organization concentrating and strengthening it. Tactics entail a certain kind of hedonistic foresight. The point of every action, no matter how circumscribed, must be the total destruction of the enemy. Industrial societies have to evolve their own specific forms of guerrilla warfare (b). Subversion is the only possible revolutionary use of the spiritual and material values distributed by consumer society: the ultimate weapon of transcendence (c).

a) Economic necessity and play don't mix. Financial transactions are deadly serious: you don't fool around with money. The elements of play contained within feudal economy were gradually squeezed out by the rationality of money exchange. Playing with exchange means bartering products without worrying too much about strictly standardized equivalents. But from the moment that capitalism forced its commercial relationships on the world, all such caprice was forbidden; and today's dictatorship of the commodity shows clearly that this system intends to enforce these relationships everywhere, at every level of life.

The pastoral relationships of country life in the high Middle Ages tempered the purely economic necessities of feudalism with a sort of freedom; play often took the upper hand even in the *corvée*, in the dispensing of justice, in the settling of debts. By throwing the whole of everyday life onto the battlefield of production and consumption,

capitalism crushes the urge to play while at the same time trying the harness it as a source of profit. So, over the last few decades, we have seen the attraction of the unknown turned into mass tourism, adventure turned into scientific expeditions, the great game of war turned into operational strategy, and the taste for change turned into mere changes in taste.

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The sacred order knew how to cope with the profane and iconoclastic game: witness the irreverent and obscene carvings to be found in cathedrals. Without muting them, the Church was able to embrace cynical laughter, biting fantasy and nihilistic scorn. Under its mantle the demoniac game was safe. Bourgeois power, on the other hand, had to put play in quarantine, isolate it in a special ward, as though afraid that it might infect other human activities. This privileged and despised area set apart from commerce constituted the domain of artistic activity. And so things remained until economic imperialism reached even this sphere and redeveloped it into a cultural supermarket.

It was in fact from art, from the zone where it had survived longest, that the urge to play broke through the strata of prohibitions which had come to overlay it: this eruption was called Dada. "The Dadaist event awoke the primitive-irrational play instinct which had been held down in the audience," said Hugo Ball. Once embarked on the fatal path of pranks and scandals, art was bound to bring down with it, in its fall, the whole edifice which the Spirit of Seriousness had built to the greater glory of the bourgeoisie. Consequently, play in our time has donned the robe of insurrection. Henceforward, the total game and the revolution of everyday life are one.

The desire to play returns to destroy the hierarchical society which banished it. It becomes the motor of a new type of society based on real participation. It is impossible to foresee the details of such a society—a society in which play will be completely unrestricted—but we may expect to find the following:

- rejection of all leaders and all hierarchies
- rejection of self-sacrifice
- rejection of roles
- freedom of genuine self-realization
- transparent social relationships.

* * *

All true play involves rules and playing with rules. Watch children at play. They know the rules of the game, they can remember them perfectly well, but they are always breaking them, always dreaming up new ways of getting round them. But for children cheating does not have the connotations it does for adults. Cheating is part of the game, they play at cheating, accomplices even in their disputes. What they are really doing is spurring themselves on to create new games. And sometimes they are successful: a new game is found and unfolds. They revitalize their playfulness without interrupting its flow.

Play comes to an end as soon as authority crystallizes, becomes absolute and assumes a magical aura. Even so playfulness, however lighthearted, always involves a certain spirit of organization and the discipline this implies. If a play leader proves necessary, his power is never wielded at the expense of the autonomous power of each individual. Rather it is the focus of each individual will, the collective counterpart of each particular desire. So the project of participation demands a coherent organization allowing the decisions of each individual to be the decision of everyone concerned. Obviously, small intimate groups, micro-societies, offer the best conditions for such experiments. Within them the game can be the sole arbiter of the intricacies of communal life, harmonizing individual whims, desires and passions. This is especially true where the game in question is an insurrectionary one imposed upon a group by its wish to live outside the official world.

The urge to play is incompatible with self-sacrifice. You can lose, pay the



James Kruehlin

forfeit, submit to the rules, be given a bad time; but this is the logic of the game, not the logic of a Cause, not the logic of self-sacrifice. Once the ideal of sacrifice appears the game becomes sacred and its rules become rites. For those who play, the rules, along with the ways of playing with them, are an integral part of the game. In the realm of the sacred, by contrast, rituals cannot be played with, they can only be broken, can only be transgressed (let us not forget that pissing on the altar is still a way of paying homage to the Church). Only play can deconsecrate, open up the possibilities of total freedom. This is the principle of subversion, the freedom to change the sense of everything which serves Power: the freedom, for example, to turn Chartres Cathedral into a fun-fair, into a labyrinth, into a shooting-range, into a dream landscape....

In a group revolving around play, boring and domestic chores might be allotted as penalties, as the price paid for losing a point in a game. Or, more simply, they could be used to employ unoccupied time, as a sort of active rest: assuming, as a contrast, the value of a stimulant and making the resumption of play more exciting. The construction of such situations can only be based on the dialectic of presence and absence, richness and poverty, pleasure and pain, the intensity of each pole accentuating the intensity of the other.

In any case, any technique utilized in an atmosphere of sacrifice and coercion loses much of its cutting edge. Its actual effectiveness is mixed up with a purely repressive purpose, and the oppression of creativity reduces the effectiveness of the oppressive apparatus. Ludic attraction is the only possible basis for a non-alienated labor, *ie.*, productive work.

Within the game, the playing of roles inevitably involves playing *with* roles. The spectacular role demands complete conviction; a ludic role, on the contrary, demands a certain distancing. One has to watch oneself over one's shoulder, just as professional actors like to

joke *sotto voce* between dramatic tirades. Spectacular organization is completely out of its depth with this sort of thing. The Marx Brothers have shown what a role can become if you play with it—an example that the cinema is barely able to contain, and which gives some idea of what would happen if people started playing with real-life roles.

When someone begins to play a per-

The desire to play returns to destroy the hierarchical society which banished it. It becomes the motor of a new type of society based on real participation. It is impossible to foresee the details of such a society—a society in which play will be completely unrestricted—but we may expect to find the following:

- rejection of all leaders and all hierarchies***
- rejection of self-sacrifice***
- rejection of roles***
- freedom of genuine self-realization***
- transparent social relationships.***

manent role, a serious role, he either wrecks the game or it wrecks him. Consider the unhappy case of the provocateur. The provocateur is the specialist in collective games. He has mastered their techniques but not their dialectic. At times he is able to give expression to the group's offensive tendencies—the provocateur always urges immediate offensive action—but in the end he is always betrayed by the demands of his role and mission, which prevent him from incarnating the group's need for defense. This contradiction is what seals his invariable fate. And who makes the best provocateur? The play leader who becomes a leader *tout court*.

The urge to play is the only possible basis for a community whose interests are identical with those of the individual. The traitor, unlike the provocateur, appears quite spontaneously in revolutionary groups. When does he appear? Whenever the spirit of play has died in

a group, and with it, inevitably, the possibility of real participation. The traitor is one who cannot express himself through the sort of participation he is offered and decides to "play" against this participation: not to correct but to destroy it. Treachery is the senile disease of revolutionary groups. Selling out on play is the *prime* treachery, the one which justifies all the others.

Inasmuch as it embodies the consciousness of radical subjectivity, the project of participation enhances the transparency of human relationships. The game of insurrection is part and parcel of the project of communication.

b) *Tactics* Tactics are the polemical stage of the game. They provide the necessary continuity between poetry *in statu nascendi* (play) and the organization of spontaneity (poetry). Essentially technical in nature, they prevent spontaneity burning itself out in the general confusion. We know how cruelly absent tactics have been from most popular uprisings. And we also know just how offhand historians can be about spontaneous revolutions. No serious

study, no methodical analysis, nothing approaching the level of Clausewitz's book on war. Revolutionaries have ignored Makhno's battles almost as thoroughly as bourgeois generals have studied Napoleon's.

In the absence of a more detailed analysis, a few remarks are in order.

An efficiently hierarchized army can win a war, but not a revolution; an undisciplined mob can win neither. The problem then is how to organize, without creating a hierarchy; in other words, how to make sure that the leader of the game doesn't become just "the Leader." The only safeguard against authority and rigidity setting in is a playful attitude. Creativity plus a machine gun is an unstoppable combination. Villa's and Makhno's troops routed the most hardened professional soldiers of their day. But once playfulness rigidifies, the battle is lost. The revolution fails so that its leader can be

infallible. Why was Villa defeated at Celaya? Because he fell back on old tactical and strategic games, instead of making up new ones. Technically, Villa was carried away by memories of Ciudad Juarez, where his men had fallen on the enemy from the rear by silently cutting their way through the walls of house after house. He failed to see the importance of the military advances of World War I: machine-gun nests, mortars, trenches, etc. Politically, a certain narrow-mindedness prevented him from seeing the importance of gaining the support of the industrial proletariat. It is significant that Obregon's army, which defeated Villa's *Dorados*, included workers' militias and German military advisers.

The strength of revolutionary armies lies in their creativity. Frequently the first days of an insurrection are a walk-over simply because nobody pays the slightest attention to the enemy's rules: because they invent a new game and because everyone takes part in its elaboration. But if this creativity flags, if it becomes repetitive, if the revolutionary army becomes a regular army, then blind devotion and hysteria try in vain to make up for military weakness. Infatuation with past victories breeds terrible defeats. The magic of the Cause and the Leader replaces the conscious unity of the will to live and the will to conquer. In 1525, having held the princes at bay for two years, 40,000 peasants, for whom tactics had been replaced by religious fanaticism, were hacked to pieces at Frankenhausen; the feudal army lost only three men. In 1964, at Stanleyville, hundreds of Mulelists, convinced they were invincible, allowed themselves to be massacred by throwing themselves onto a bridge defended by two machine guns. Yet these were the same men who had previously captured trucks and arms from the National Congolese Army by pitting the road with elephant traps.

Hierarchical organization and com-

plete lack of discipline are both inefficient. In classic warfare, the inefficiency of one side triumphs over the inefficiency of its adversary through technical superiority. In revolutionary war the poetic force of the rebels takes the enemy by surprise, so depriving him of his only possible advantage, the technical one. As soon as the guerrillero's tactics become repetitive, however, the enemy learns to play by his rules and

Within the game, the playing of roles inevitably involves playing with roles. The spectacular role demands complete conviction; a ludic role, on the contrary, demands a certain distancing. One has to watch oneself over one's shoulder, just as professional actors like to joke sotto voce between dramatic tirades. Spectacular organization is completely out of its depth with this sort of thing. The Marx Brothers have shown what a role can become if you play with it—an example that the cinema is barely able to contain, and which gives some idea of what would happen if people started playing with real-life roles.

an anti-guerrilla campaign will then have every chance of destroying or at least blocking an already inhibited popular creativity.

* * *

How can the discipline combat requires be maintained among troops who refuse blind obedience to leaders? Most of the time, it must be said, revolutionary armies either succumb to the devil of submission or plunge into the deep blue sea of a heedless search for pleasure.

The call to self-sacrifice and renunciation in the name of freedom is the foundation stone of future slavery. On the other hand, premature rejoicing and haphazard pleasure-seeking invariably herald repression and the Bloody Sundays of order being restored. No, the

game has to have coherence and discipline, but these must be supplied by the pleasure principle itself. The risk of pain is part and parcel of the quest for greatest possible pleasure. Whence the energy with which this quest is pursued: there is no other explanation, for instance, for the verve with which the roistering soldiery of pre-Revolutionary France would attack a town over and over again, no matter how many times they were repelled. What drove them onward was their passionate anticipation of the *fête* to come—in this case, a *fête* of pillage and debauchery. Pleasure is heightened when it is long in the making. The most effective tactics are indistinguishable from calculated hedonism. The will to live, brutal and unvarnished, is the fighter's most deadly secret weapon—and one liable to be turned against any who do not take it seriously: when his own life is in the balance, a soldier has every reason to shoot those placed in authority over him. A revolutionary army has thus everything to gain from making its every member into a skilled tactician in his own right and, above all, into his own master, into someone who

knows how to work logically and consistently towards his own gratification.

In the struggle to come, the desire to live intensely will replace the old motive of pillage. Tactics will become a science of pleasure, so true is it that the search for pleasure is itself pleasurable. Such tactics, moreover, can be learned every day. The form of play known as armed combat differs in no essential way from that free play sought by everyone, more or less consciously, at every instant of their daily life. Anyone who is prepared to learn, from his simple everyday experience, what tends to kill him and what tends to strengthen him as a free individual, is already well on the way to becoming a true tactician.

There is no such thing, however, as a tactician in isolation. Only a federation of tacticians of daily life can meet the

requirements of the desire to destroy the old society. To equip such a federation, to supply its technical needs, is one of the immediate goals of the Situationist International: strategy is the collective construction of the launching pad of the revolution on the basis of the tactics of the individual's daily life.

* * *

The ambiguous notion of humanity sometimes generates a degree of indecision in spontaneous revolutionary movements. Only too frequently, the desire to make people the central concern opens the door to a paralyzing humanism. How often have revolutionaries spared their future executioners! How often have they accepted a truce which has given the enemy forces time to regroup! The ideology of humanism serves reaction and underwrites the worst inhumanity: Belgian paratroopers in Stanleyville.

No compromise is possible with the enemies of freedom—and humanism does not apply to mankind's oppressors. The ruthless elimination of counter-revolutionaries is a humanitarian act because it is the only course that averts the cruelties of bureaucratized humanism.

Lastly, another problem of spontaneous insurrection derives from the paradoxical fact that it must destroy Power *totally* by means of *partial* actions. The struggle for economic emancipation alone has made survival possible for everyone, but it has also subjected everyone to survival's limitations. Now there can be no doubt that the masses have always fought for a much broader goal, for an over-all transformation of their condition, a change in life as a whole. Of course, the idea that the whole world can be changed in one fell swoop has a mystical dimension, which is why it can so easily degenerate into the crudest reformism. Apocalypticism and demands for gradual reform eventually form an unholy alliance of undialectically resolved antagonisms. It is not surprising that pseudo-revolutionary parties always pretend that compro-

mises are the same as tactics.

The revolution cannot be won either by accumulating minor victories or by an all-out frontal assault. Guerrilla war is total war. This is the path on which the Situationist International is set: calculated harassment on every front—cultural, political, economic and social. Concentrating on everyday life will ensure the unity of the combat.

Subversion In its broadest sense, sub-

We know how cruelly absent tactics have been from most popular uprisings. And we also know just how offhand historians can be about spontaneous revolutions. No serious study, no methodical analysis, nothing approaching the level of Clausewitz's book on war. Revolutionaries have ignored Makhno's battles almost as thoroughly as bourgeois generals have studied Napoleon's.

version (*détournement*) is an all-embracing reinsertion of things into play. It is the act whereby play grasps and reunites beings and things which were frozen solid in a hierarchy of fragments.

One evening, as night fell, my friends and I wandered into the Palais de Justice in Brussels. The building is a monstrosity, crushing the poor quarters beneath it and standing guard over the fashionable Avenue Louise—out of which, some day, we will make a breathtakingly beautiful wasteland. As we drifted through the labyrinth of corridors, staircases and suite after suite of rooms, we discussed what could be done to make the place habitable; for a time we occupied the enemy's territory; through the power of our imagination we transformed the thieves' den into a fantastic funfair, into a sunny pleasure dome, where the most amazing adventures would, for the first time, be really lived. In short, subversion is the basic expression of creativity. Daydreaming subverts the world. Sometimes subversion is like Monsieur Jourdain speaking prose; sometimes it is more like James Joyce writing *Ulysses*. This is, it may be spontaneous or it may require a good

deal of reflection.

It was in 1955 that Debord, struck by Lautréamont's systematic use of subversion, first drew attention to the virtually unlimited possibilities of the technique. In 1960, Jorn was to write: "Subversion is a game made possible by the fact that things can be *devalorized*. Every element of past culture must be either re-invested or scrapped." Debord, in *Internationale Situationiste* no.3, developed the concept further: "The two basic principles of subversion are the loss of importance of each originally independent element (which may even lose its first sense completely), and the organization of a new significant whole which confers a fresh meaning on each element." Recent history allows one to be still more precise. From now on it is clear that:

—As more and more things rot and fall apart, subversion appears spontaneously. Consumer society plays into the hands of

those who want to create new significant wholes.

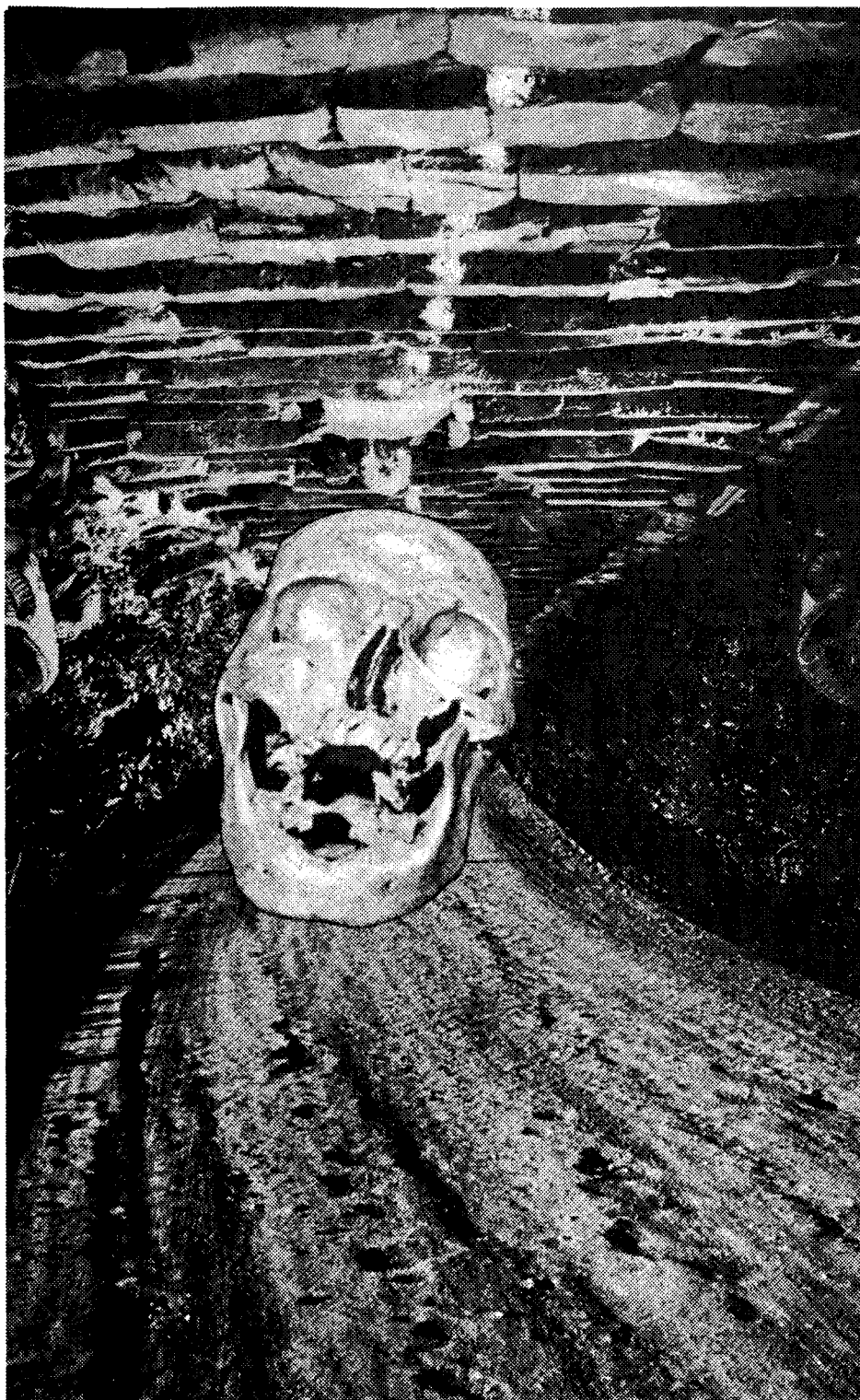
—Culture is no longer a particularly privileged theater. The art of subversion can be an integral part of all forms of resistance to the organization of everyday life.

—Since part-truths rule our world, subversion is now the only technique at the service of the total view. As a revolutionary act, subversion is the most coherent, most popular and best adapted to the praxis of insurrection. By a sort of natural evolution—the desire to play—it leads people to take up an ever more extreme and radical stance.

* * *

Our experience, both spiritual and material, is falling to pieces about our ears, and its disintegration is a direct consequence of the development of consumer society. The phase of devalorization, and thus the possibility of subversion, is the work of contemporary history. Subversion has become part of the tactics of transcendence; an essentially positive act.

While the abundance of consumer



Johann Humyn Being

goods is hailed everywhere as a major step forward, the way these goods are used by society, as we know invalidates all their positive aspects. Because the *gadget* is primarily a source of profit for capitalist and bureaucratic regimes, it cannot be allowed to serve any other purpose. The ideology of consumerism acts like a fault in manufacture, sabotaging the commodity it packages and turning what could be the material basis

of happiness into a new form of slavery. In this context, subversion broadcasts new ways of using commodities; it invents superior *uses* of goods, uses whereby subjectivity can take strength from something that was originally marketed to weaken it. The crisis of the spectacle will throw the forces now mobilized for deception into the camp of lived truth. The problems of tactics and strategy revolve around the ques-

tion of how to turn against capitalism the weapons that commercial necessity has forced it to distribute. We need a manual of subversion—a “Consumer’s Guide to Not Consuming.”

Subversion, which forged its first weapons in the artistic sphere, has now become the art of handling every sort of weapon. Having first appeared amidst the cultural crisis of the years 1910-25, it has gradually spread to every area touched by social decomposition. Despite which, art still offers a field of valid experiment for the techniques of subversion; and there is still much to be learnt from the past. Surrealism failed because it tried to re-invest Dadaist anti-values which had not been completely reduced to zero. Any attempt to build on values which have not been thoroughly purged by a nihilistic crisis must end in the same way: recuperation by the dominant mechanisms of social organization. Contemporary cyberneticians have taken their “combinatory” attitude towards art so far as to hail any accumulation of disparate elements whatsoever, even if the particular elements *have not been devalued at all*. Pop Art or Jean-Luc Godard—the same apologetics of the junk-yard.

In the realm of art it is also possible to undertake a tentative search for new forms of agitation and propaganda. In 1963, for instance, Michèle Bernstein produced a series of works in plaster with toy soldiers, cars, tanks, etc. With such titles as “The Victory of the Bonnot Gang,” “The Victory of the Paris Commune,” “The Victory of the Budapest Workers’ Councils of 1956,” these works stood for a dereification of particular historical events. They tended at once towards two goals: the rectification of the history of the workers’ movement and the realization of art. No matter how limited and speculative, agitational art of this kind opens the door to everyone’s creative spontaneity, if only by proving that in the particularly distorted realm of art subversion is the only language, the only kind of action, that contains its own self-criticism.

There are no limits to creativity. There is no end to subversion.

Copies of Raoul Vaneigem's Revolution of Everyday Life are available from C.A.L. Press, POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, for \$16.00postpaid. (For PriorityMail add \$4.00.)



Guy Debord, 1968

The Situationist Years

Len Bracken

"Guy Debord 1968: The Situationist Years" is the twenty-third chapter of Len Bracken's important new biography, Guy Debord—Revolutionary, just published by Feral House.

Far more important than the reputation he earned for his provocations in the radical/avant-garde art milieu or as an innovative filmmaker, Debord will remain best known as the primary architect, theorist and strategist of the Situationist International from its birth in 1957 through its demise in 1972. And, of course, the Situationists are best known for the inciting role they played in the May-June 1968 general strike (and near revolution) in France. What follows is an account of the S.I.'s, and especially Debord's, involvement in the unfolding events of this extraordinary "revolutionary festival that contained within it, a generalized critique of all alienations."

Len Bracken has written a surprisingly accessible intellectual biography, which provides the necessary historical and philosophical background to allow readers to make sense of his life and times. The biography successfully situates Debord's thought and activities within the context of world history and the trajectory of the modern revolutionary movement. As such it is an excellent place to begin an acquaintance with one of the pre-eminent post-World War II revolutionary groups. Other equally important texts for understanding the situationists include: Guy Debord's masterwork Society of the Spectacle, fellow situationist Raoul Vaneigem's The Revolution of Everyday Life (serialized in this magazine), and Ken Knabb's Situationist International Anthology (all available from C.A.L. Press, see page 82 of this magazine).

Len Bracken's Guy Debord—Revolutionary is available directly from the publisher for \$14.95 + \$2.00 postage and handling: Feral House, 2532 Lincoln Blvd., Suite 359, Venice, CA 90291; email: cult@feralhouse.com. It can also be ordered with credit card from Atomic Books at 1-800-778-6246.

It was in December, 1967 that Vaneigem's *The Revolution of Everyday Life* was published by Gallimard. This *Treatise on How to Live*, as a literal translation of the French title reads, has done as much to spread sabotage and subversion as any book I know. With his own references to writing the book at cafes and the legend about his dismissal from his high school

teaching post for preaching free love, we can almost catch a fleeting image of a free-wheeling young Raoul drifting through the streets of Paris and Brussels. He sneers back at those who would make him feel like an object, all the while feeling the humiliation worthy of a Rousseau. Violently atheist, inspiring in his denunciation of the "disgrace of work" and the "dictatorship of consumption," Vaneigem is widely read, albeit in flawed translations—many, if not most of the people who have become interested in the S.I. came to it via *The Revolution of Everyday Life*.

For that reason, and because this is a book on Debord, I'll forego a detailed exposition of this influential tome and encourage readers to check it out for themselves. Rather than a series of concise, numbered theses as with Debord, Vaneigem divides his book in half and fills the expansive pages with literary references and cynical similes such as "like arsenic in jelly." The first part is his lyrical critique of "The Perspective of Power," informed by his study of Roman philology, Hegel and Marx. As with his "Basic Banalities," this is a very Kojevian reading of Hegel and Marx, that brings the master-slave dichotomy to the modern world. In fact, the chapter on "Exchange and Gift," with its references to potlatch and sacrifice is more reminiscent of that dissident student of Kojève, Georges Bataille, than any other S.I. text. Vaneigem's profound critique of roles, the repetition of stereotypes or any other spectacular category provides still more evidence that Greil Marcus' equation of the S.I. project with Jung's activation of archetypes is completely erroneous. Part of Vaneigem's appeal is that he addresses the idea of freedom and sovereignty from an individual perspective rooted in everyday life in his "Reversal of Perspective."

Those who speak of revolution and class struggle with explicit references to everyday life, without understanding the subversiveness of love and what's positive in the refusal of constraints, they have a cadaver in their mouths.

These lines and many others from *R.E.L.* (as Vaneigem's book is referred to in England) would find their way onto the walls of the Latin Quarter during the hot days of May '68, even if Vaneigem wasn't there—actually he was there, but he went on "vacation" for a week at the height of the events, which resulted in some acrimony between him and other members of the S.I. Looking back on the May Revolution, Andre Stephane went so far as to say that "Vaneigem's very



Situationist graffiti—"Take your desires for reality." (from *Leaving the 20th Century*).

style is that of the slogans of May. He seems, moreover, to have been at the origin of many of the most successful and poetic phrases.... The author of the *Treatise on Living* gives us a key for understanding the role and place of the *paranoic mechanisms of our civilization*."

Aside from the release of Debord and Vaneigem's books, 1967 was a year of premonition—Soviet dissidents protested in Moscow, anti-military German students protested across the republic, riots in Berlin, Tunis.... "Burn this town down" was shouted at the radical riots that rocked Newark, Detroit, Minneapolis, New York, Washington, DC and many other cities during the summer of 1967. The C.I.A. set up the illegal Operation Chaos to look into war protesters as Mao's efforts to bring Chinese peasants into the Cultural Revolution created a virtual civil war. In the Fall, agitation erupted at the University of Algeria and a deadly riot occurred in Tokyo. French workers at Saint-Azire, the largest shipyard of the country, went on strike. Che Guevara was killed in Bolivia in October and a week of mourning was held in his honor in Paris in December. As we will see in greater detail below, the student agitation and strike at University of Nanterre in March and November (respectively) were premonitions of what would come the following year.

During the months of November and December 1967, Debord and Vaneigem were picked up by the cops and hauled in for questioning several times. The charge? Debord was the editor who published (in *Internationale Situationiste* #11) Vaneigem's stolen comic strip images adorned with revolutionary phrases; the stolen strip was reproduced in Spain, Denmark and Holland. It's not clear why they were let go, but these sorts of comics would reappear in the Nanterre insurrection and, with a workers' council slant, in the revolution of May '68.

To digress for a moment, according to Douglas Pouch's *The French Secret Services*, the Interior Ministry under de Gaulle and Pompidou wasn't spying too closely on the extreme left—there was no information on Cohn-Bendit, for example, when the events erupted in 1968. Given his years of radical activity, one would think that Debord certainly had a file at the Renseignements Generaux de la Prefecture de Paris. According to the head of the French equivalent of the FBI, the DST (Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire), the Renseignements Generaux tried to blame May '68 on the C.I.A. and Mossad in order to get increased funds for counterintelligence. This charge was easily disproved, and Raymond Marcellin, the Interior Minister at the time, would later (*La Guerre politique*, 1985) blame May '68 on Maoists, other revolutionary groups and "Jews and Germans." After May '68, the Renseignements Generaux created a special "central operational brigade" to destroy left-wing groups through tested methods—burglary, agent provocateurs, phone taps, mail searches, etc. In "*This*

bad reputation..." Debord asserts that "even in the pure S.I. of 1967 there were two provocateurs-infiltrators, perhaps three." It's impossible to say if this increased surveillance played a part in the dissolution of the S.I. a few years after May '68, but this pressure certainly didn't encourage a group that specialized in subversive scandals and knew it needed to democratize if it were to continue to exist in a viable way.

The protests and riots that had spanned the globe in 1967 continued in 1968: student protests against the docking of the U.S. aircraft carrier Enterprise at European ports; student agitation in Warsaw, Algiers, Berlin; riots in Rio de Janeiro; the attempt on German radical Rudi Dutschke's life created solidarity marches in Paris, Rome, Vienna and London. But the activity that interests us here begins on January 8 with the famous incident between Cohn-Bendit and Minister Missoffe, in which the minister was publicly criticized by the German student at the inauguration of a swimming pool at Nanterre (a dismal suburb of Paris): "*Your White Book on Young People* doesn't say a word about the problem of sex!" It should be noted that the Enragés (sympathizers with, and future allies of, the Situationists) had prepared the student body for the event by telling everyone that the pool would become an excellent place for orgies. These Enragés of Nanterre, named after proto-anarchists in the French Revolution, were as fond of scandal as the Situationists, and following the swimming pool incident, more and more students began to imitate their radical tactics. Plainclothes cops were photographed by students on campus, and the pictures were posted. When the cops were sent in, they were thus easily recognized and chased away by anarchists and Enragés. In February, the Enragés circulated the lyrics to songs insulting the university administration and numerous professors. On March 22, the Enragés and other students

occupied a campus administration building, giving birth to the March 22nd Movement, which, after many minor scandals in April, resulted in the closure of the university for two days on May 2. This was the act that spread the agitation to the Latin Quarter of Paris. Although the Enragés left the occupation early because of the presence of certain objectionable radicals (leaving their mark on the walls with slogans such as “Never Work,” and “Take your desires for reality”), and discontinued their activity on campus, they were treated harshly by the authorities—Patrick Cheval was expelled from the university and Gerard Bigorgne was banned from all establishments of higher learning in France. René Riesel and Cohn-Bendit were scheduled to appear before a university commission on May 6.

Before going into the events of May, note that the best eyewitness account is Situationist René Viénet's *Enragés and Situationists in the Occupation Movement, France, May '68*. My account draws on this report, as well as the assessments made by Pascal Dumontier in *The Situationists and May 68* and Jean-Francois Martos' *History of the Situationist International*. Numerous other books deal with the subject, but none offer the same focus on the Situationist role. It should also be said at the outset that none of the Situationists, perhaps Debord least of all, sought to gain personal glory in a spectacular way. When the actions of the Situationists are described, we should bear in mind that Debord, Khayati, Viénet and later Vaneigem were the only Situationists in Paris at the time. In other words, Debord certainly had a hand in all Situationist activity during the occupation movement. And lest anyone doubt his influence, note that the first press run of *Society of the Spectacle* had sold out by May.

The first May Day parade in fifteen years took place in Paris on May 1, 1968. Scuffles erupted between the security detail of the major union federation, the C.G.T., and revolutionary students. As mentioned above, the Nanterre campus was closed indefinitely on May 2. Meanwhile, students in Berkeley rebelled against the Vietnam war and copies of Che Guevara's memoir were burned by cops in Barcelona. The March 22nd Movement and the student union called for a meeting in the courtyard of the Sorbonne on Friday, May 3. Viénet was there:

In itself, the meeting of May 3rd was banal: as usual three or four hundred hangers-on responded to the call. The few dozen fascists of the “Occident” group counter-demonstrated at the beginning of the afternoon on the Boulevard Saint-Michel. Several Enragés at the Sorbonne called for the organization of self-defense. Furniture had to be broken up as there were no clubs. Rector Roche and his policemen thought this would be sufficient pretext for an attack. The police and the gendarmerie mobile invaded the courtyard of the Sorbonne without meeting



The Situationists go to the cinema. London, September, 1960.

resistance. The students were encircled. The police then offered them free passage out of the courtyard. The students accepted and the first to leave were in fact allowed to pass. The operation took time and other students began to gather outside in the quarter. The remaining two hundred demonstrators inside the Sorbonne, including all the organizers, were arrested. As the police vans carried them away, the Latin Quarter erupted. One of the two vans never reached its destination. Only three policemen guarded the second van. They were beaten up, and several dozen demonstrators escaped.

A week of street fighting ensued—students were arrested and sentenced to hard time. Police occupied the Latin Quarter. On May 6, the Enragé René Riesel and other students were to appear before a disciplinary commission at the Sorbonne. Demonstrations and riots erupted around the Latin Quarter. Barricades went up and were defended against the police. Suburban hoods (*blousons noirs*) had come to the center of the city to fight side-by-side the students. Cars were burned; stores looted. Slogans were sprayed on the walls. The unions, including the student union, were against the actions of the most revolutionary students and would alternate in their support—for and against (mostly against)—the demonstrations and occupations. According to Viénet, the Situationists were active in creating the barricades and defending them along with young and old workers, students and hoods on rue Gay-Lussac the night of May 10. As the post festum photos show, this had been a real combat zone where revolutionaries responded to the chloride gas grenades and bullets of the police with Molotov cocktails and paving stones.

On May 11, the unions called for a strike on May 13—much to the dismay of Prime Minister Pompidou who had just returned from Afghanistan. He quickly agreed to release

imprisoned students and allowed university buildings to be used to discuss education reform. Pompidou's biggest mistake was to promise to withdraw all police from the Latin Quarter. On Monday May 13, the police withdrew as one million protesters marched through the streets of Paris during the general strike. The students, meeting in the Champ de Mars, decided to occupy the Sorbonne; and at 9:30 PM, it was declared an "Autonomous Popular University, open in permanence, night and day, to all workers."

Lyrical slogans and diverted publicity posters began to appear in the Sorbonne. Viénet reports that although the Enragé René Riesel's remarks about solidarity with looters and demands for absolute power to Workers' Councils weren't applauded as much as those speakers at the Grand Amphitheater of the Sorbonne who simply wanted university reform, Riesel did get elected by the General Assembly to the Occupation Committee—the institution of executive power in the occupied Sorbonne. Riesel would call for and defend "direct democracy at the Sorbonne" in the face of all the problems the Occupation Committee had in asserting its authority. The Occupation Committee was composed of fifteen members, "elected and revokable anytime by the general assembly." This was on May 14, the day when the Enragés and S.I. formed a joint committee and took up stakes in the "Jules Bonnot" room. By all accounts, Debord was very calm, even tranquil, during the occupation. Late in the day, workers at Sud-Aviation factory in Nantes occupied the plant and barricaded themselves in the company president's office. The only thing the Occupation Committee did on May 15, was send a telegram of support to the workers at the Sud-Aviation factory in Nantes. The S.I. reportedly participated in the debates before the General Assembly. According to Debord, only once in his life did he sign a prescriptive tract describing what needed to be done—this was signed on May 14 and distributed the next day.

FROM THE S.I. TO COMRADES WHO HAVE DECLARED THEMSELVES IN AGREEMENT WITH OUR THESES.

Comrades,

The student "revolt" of Paris began with a small group of "Enragés" of Nanterre over the last few months; René Riesel; Gérard Bigorne (expelled in April from all French universities for five years), etc. The group took pro-S.I. positions. The rest of the "Movement of March 22nd" (more moderate and confused) found its leader in Danny Cohn-Bendit (anarchist from the group Black and Red) who accepted the role of spectacle celebrity mixed with a certain honest radicalism.

The appearance of these two comrades as well as five other leaders before the University Council unleashed the trouble of May 3. The street movement of May 6 (10 to 15,000 youth) began to be recuperated by the tardy support of the bureaucrats of the U.N.E.F., P.C. etc.

Everything bounced back superbly the night of May 10-11. A section of the 5th district was entirely closed by barricades and was in the hands of a little insurrection for close to eight hours. The forces of order that surrounded it used the last four hours to reduce it. We were 3 to 4,000 rioters strong (about half students, many high schoolers or *blousons noirs*, a few hundred young and old workers).

Violent repression, as we expected. Faced with the loud protest of the entire bureaucratic left and the emotion in working class districts, the government pulled back. Almost all the Paris faculties were occupied and turned into clubs. What dominated was actually direct democracy with a base that wanted to put society

in question, that wanted unification with workers, and which resolutely condemned Stalinist bureaucracy. Three positions appeared in the free general assembly of the occupation of the Sorbonne on May 14, 1968.

1. The first (between a third to half, but who say little) simply want university reform and are at risk of following the recuperation led by the professors on the left.
2. The second—of better stock—wants to pursue the struggle up to the destruction of the Gaullist regime or even of capitalism (all of the nuances of known leftists). Among them, the Federation of Revolutionary Students (Trotskyist Lambertist) which is badly discredited by condemning the barricades.
3. A third position (of a highly vocal minority) was expressed by a declaration of Riesel (which will be communicated to you as soon as possible) wants the abolition of classes, of work, of the spectacle and of survival, and demands the absolute power of Workers' Councils.

The possible developments (in a declining order of probability) are as follows: a) exhaustion of the movement (at least to the degree that it remains with the students before the anti-bureaucratic agitation can win over more workers) b) repression (anticipating the arrest of a large number of rioters) if the movement radicalizes or is maintained for a long time without rocking the working class and dissolving the bureaucracies that control it c) social revolution.

Yesterday we constituted the Committee Enragé-S.I. that began posting the Sorbonne with radical, extremely coherent proclamations. We will continue. Riesel is a member of the first Committee of the Occupation of the Sorbonne (revocable every day by the base).

Do the maximum to make the agitation known, maintained and understood. The principal themes, in the immediate moment in France seem to us to be:

- Occupation of factories
- Constitution of Workers' Councils
- Definitive closure of the university
- A complete critique of all alienations; affirmation of the principal Situationist theses (in particular the diffusion of the S.I.'s "Minimum Definition of Revolutionary Organizations").

Paris, May 15, 1968

Guy-Mustapha-Raoul-René

Vaneigem had arrived to sign the document, only to leave for a week's vacation—The "Communique of the S.I. Concerning Vaneigem," written after his resignation described the situation:

The first factory had been occupied the day before, and at this date the most imbecilic member of the most retarded group could not doubt that a very grave social crisis had begun. Nevertheless Vaneigem, much better informed, as soon as he had appended his signature to our circular, left the same afternoon to take his train to rejoin his holiday location on the Mediterranean, booked a long time ago. Several days later, learning abroad, through the mass media, what was proceeding in France (as predicted), he naturally set about returning, crossing with great difficulty the strike-bound country, and rejoining us one week after his ridiculous faux-pas. By then the decisive days, when we were able to do the most for the movement, had passed. Now we're well aware that Vaneigem truly likes revolution and that he in no way lacks courage. Thus one can only understand this as a borderline case of the separation between the rigorous routine of an unshakably orderly daily life and the passion, real but heavily disarmed, for revolution. (reprinted in *The Veritable Split in the International*)

The Enragé-S.I. Committee republished their "Minimum



Building barricades in Paris, May '68. (from *Leaving the 20th Century*).

Definition of Revolutionary Organizations" on May 15th as the Occupation Committee found itself in a crisis. Thirteen of the fifteen members deserted the Occupation Committee for other committees, and the General Assembly confirmed eight members of a self-appointed Coordination Committee as an auxiliary to the Occupation Committee. A power struggle between the two committees ensued. In the courtyard of the Sorbonne, Riesel denounced the manipulations of the bureaucrats of the Coordination Committee and told them to face the General Assembly. When the members of the Coordination Committee explained their maneuvers publicly, they were forced by the General Assembly to slink away in shame.

On May 16, the Occupation Committee was reduced to Riesel and one other person. They were bivouacked in the Jules Bonnot room with the S.I., the Enragés and fifteen others. They established a security detail to get the means to disseminate the Occupation Committee's call for the "immediate occupation of all factories in France and the formation of Workers' Councils." Viénet, once again, gives us the eyewitness account:

As has been shown above, the occupation committee had been stripped of all means at its disposal for the execution of the slightest activity. To distribute its appeal, it set out to reappropriate those means. It could count on the support of the Enragés, the Situationists and a dozen other revolutionaries. Using a

megaphone from the windows of the Jules Bonnot Room they asked for, and received, numerous volunteers from the courtyard. The text was recopied and read in all the other amphitheatres and faculties. Since the printing had been purposely slowed down by the Inter-Faculty Liaison Committee, the Occupation Committee had to requisition machines and organize its own distribution service. Because the sound crew refused to read the text at regular intervals, the Occupation Committee had their equipment seized. Out of spite the specialists sabotaged their equipment as they were leaving, and partisans of the committee had to repair it. Telephones were taken over to relay the statement to press agencies, the provinces, and abroad. By 3:30 P.M. it was beginning to be distributed effectively.

One can only begin to imagine what it was like to be standing in the courtyard of the occupied Sorbonne as the entire country began to shut down. These exhilarating events terrified those people strongly opposed to the fanning of flames of discontent. The saboteurs were being sabotaged by reformers who were afraid of the nation-wide wildcat. As factories around the country were occupied, the Occupation Committee announced the occupations over the Sorbonne P.A. system. At 4:30 P.M., the Occupation Committee issued the tract "Vigilance!"

Comrades,

The supremacy of the revolutionary assembly can only mean

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New York, New York

20 years since the '77 blackout!

John Zerzan

"Amid All the Camaraderie is Much Looting this Time; Seeing the City Disappear." -Wall Street Journal headline, July 15, 1977

The *Journal* went on to quote a cop on what he saw, as the great Bastille Day break-out unfolded: "People are going wild in the borough of Brooklyn. They are looting stores by the carload." Another cop added later: "Stores were ripped open. Others have been leveled. After they looted, they burned."

At about 9:00 p.m. on July 13 the power went out in New York for 24 hours. During that period the complete impotence of the state in our most "advanced" urban space could hardly have been made more transparent.

As soon as the lights went out, cheers

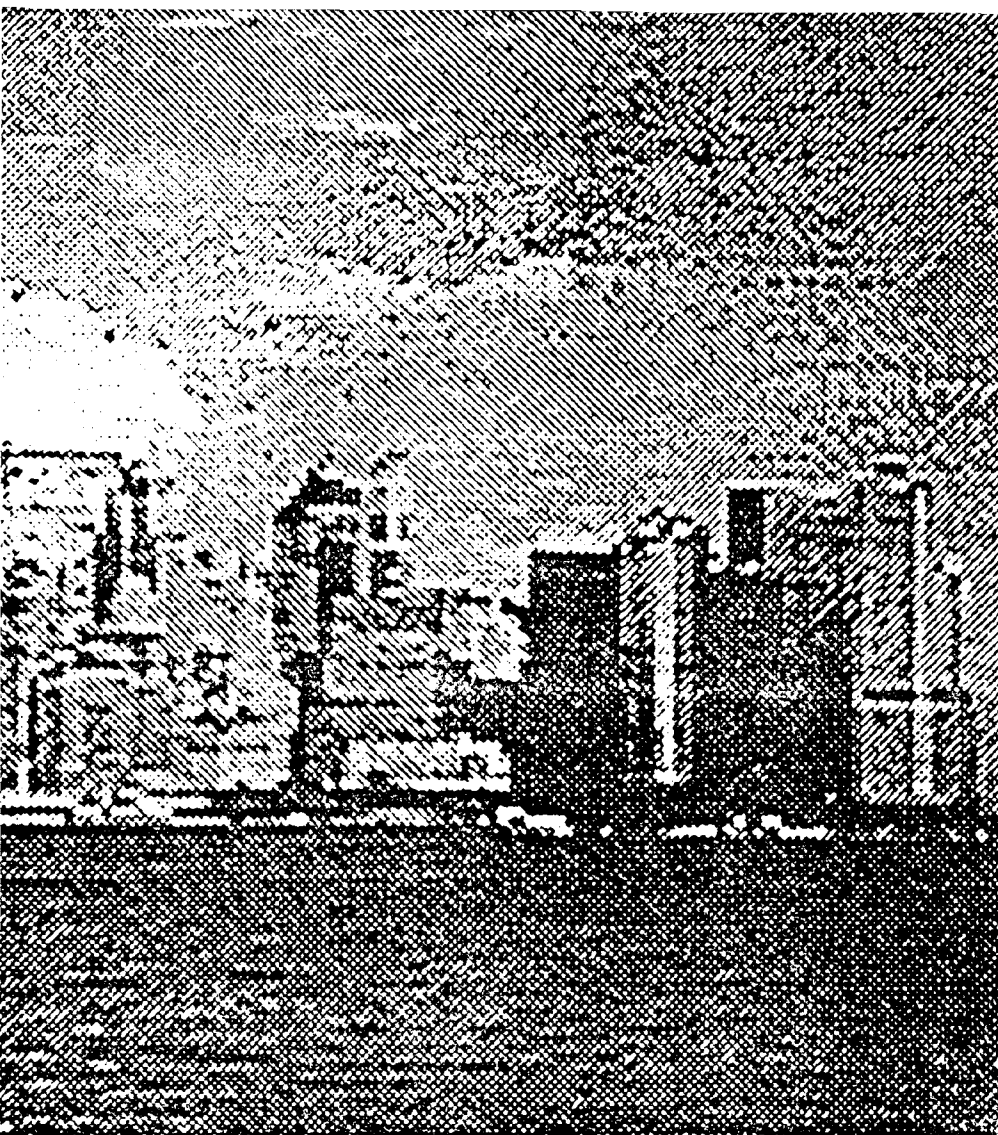
and shouts and loud music announced the liberation of huge sections of the city. The looting and burning commenced immediately, with whole families joining in the "carnival spirit." In the University Heights section of the Bronx, a Pontiac dealer lost the 50 new cars in his showroom. In many areas, tow trucks and other vehicles were used to tear away the metal gates from stores. Many multi-story furniture businesses were completely emptied by neighborhood residents.

Despite emergency alerts for the state troopers, FBI and National Guard, there was really nothing authority could do, and they knew it. A *New York Times* editorial of July 16 somewhat angrily waved aside the protests of those who wondered why there was almost no intervention on the side of property. "Are you kidding?" the *Times* snorted, pointing out that such provoca-

tion would only have meant that the entire city would still be engulfed in riots, adding that the National Guard is a "bunch of kids" who wouldn't have had a chance.

The plundering was completely multi-racial, with white, black and Hispanic businesses cleaned out and destroyed throughout major parts of Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens and the Bronx. Not a single "racial incident" was reported during the uprising, while newspaper pictures and TV news bore witness to the variously-colored faces emerging from the merchants' windows and celebrating in the streets. Similarly, looting, vandalism, and attacks on police were not confined to the City proper; Mount Vernon, Yonkers and White Plains were among suburbs in which the same things happened, albeit on a smaller scale.

Rioting broke out in the Bronx



House of Detention where prisoners started fires, seized dormitories, and almost escaped by ramming through a wall with a steel bed. Concerning the public, the Bronx District Attorney fumed, "It's lawlessness. It's almost anarchy."

Officer Gary Parlefsky, of the 30th Precinct in Harlem, said that he and other cops came under fire from guns, bottles and rocks. "We were scared to death...but worse than that, a blue uniform didn't mean a thing. They couldn't understand why we were arresting them," he continued.

At a large store at 110th Street and Eighth Avenue, the doors were smashed open and dozens of people carried off appliances. A woman in her middle 50s walked into the store and said laughingly: "Shopping with no money required!"

Attesting to the atmosphere of a

"collective celebration," as one worried columnist put it, a distribution center was spontaneously organized at a Brooklyn intersection, with piles of looted goods on display for the taking. This was shown briefly on an independent New York station, WPIX-TV, but not mentioned in the major newspapers.

The transformation of commodities into free merchandise was only aided by the coming of daylight, as the festivity and music continued. Mayor Beame, at a noon (July 15) press conference, spoke of the "night of terror," only to be mocked heartily by the continuing liberation underway throughout New York as he spoke.

Much, of course, was made of the huge contrast between the events of July, 1977 and the relatively placid, law-abiding New York blackout of November, 1965. One can only mention the

obvious fact that the dominant values are now everywhere in shreds. The "social cohesion" of class society is evaporating; New York is no isolated example.

Of course, there has been a progressive decay in recent times of restraint, hierarchy, and other enforced virtues; it hasn't happened all at once. Thus, in the 1960s, John Leggett (in his *Class, Race and Labor*) was surprised to learn upon examining the arrest records of those in the Detroit and Newark insurrections, that a great many of the participants were fully employed. This time, of the 176 people indicted as of August 8 in Brooklyn (1,004 were arrested in the borough), 48 percent were regularly employed. (The same article in the August 9th *San Francisco Chronicle* where these figures appeared also pointed out that only "six grocery stores were looted while 39 furniture stores, 20 drug stores and 17 jewelry stores and clothing stores were looted.")

And there are other similarities to New York, naturally; *Life* magazine of August 4, 1967 spoke of the "carnival-like revel of looting" in Detroit, and Professor Edward Banfield commented that "Negroes and whites mingled in the streets (of Detroit) and looted amicably side by side...."

The main difference is probably one of scale and scope—that in New York virtually all areas, even the suburbs, took the offensive and did so from the moment the lights went out. Over \$1 billion was lost in the thousands of stores looted and burned, while the cops were paralyzed. During the last New York rioting, the "Martin Luther King" days of 1968, 32 cops were injured; in one day in July, 1977, 418 cops were injured.

The left—all of it—has spoken only of the high unemployment, the police brutality; has spoken of the people of New York only as objects, and pathetic ones at that! The gleaming achievements of the unmediated/un-ideologized have all pigs scared shitless.

"New York, New York" is reprinted from John Zerzan's Elements of Refusal, on the twentieth anniversary of the blackout. John's book will soon reappear in a new edition published by C.A.L. Press/Paleo Editions. Watch for it!



Johann Humm/Being

AFTERWORD COMMENTARY ON **Form and Content in *Elements of Refusal***

Paul Z. Simons

A new, expanded edition of John Zerzan's Elements of Refusal is forthcoming from C.A.L. Press/Paleo Editions. The following afterword is excerpted from the new edition.

In the event that the powers that be ever re-institute book burning, it is my considered opinion that *Elements of Refusal* will be consigned, immediately and with extreme prejudice, to the pyre.

Elements of Refusal (EoR) broke onto the anarchist scene like a bombshell. In the fall of 1988 the book had been making the rounds of the milieu in New York, with some extremely mixed reviews, and after a Libertarian Book Club Forum I found myself in temporary possession of a copy. I finished the volume, cover to cover, in a single sitting of some fourteen hours and then re-read it in a more deliberate, careful fashion over the course of the following week. I recall distinctly the feelings associated with my first engagement with Zerzan's work, something like drowning in honey, inexorable, deliberate, overwhelming.

At the time of the publication of EoR the state of anarchist theory was dismal, particularly the North American variant. My time was spent digging up dead authors espousing simplistic theories criticizing social categories that had ceased to exist. Re-worked syndicalism, martyrologies of every stripe and description (a one-woman show called "Emma"!), and social ecology, if you had enough money to earn the degree. Further, by this time many of us had begun to see through the situationist con; their lack of rigor in ascribing an immense array of social and cultural phenomena to "the spectacle," the ludicrous use of the most retrograde Marxist categories, the childish example of their practical activity, and finally, their embrace of the Enlightenment project (the appropriation of Nature) without recognition nor discussion of the historical dialectic contained therein. As if to drive the point home, North American adherents of situationist ideas plunged head first into the same mistakes listed above and tore themselves and their various organizations and journals to theoretical shreds before they could effectively publicize their ideology.

Elements of Refusal then, was something new; Zerzan had pulled out all the stops and followed his theoretical assumptions to their logical conclusion. In the process he introduced three innovations that now form the foundation of much of the theoretical discussion in North American anarchist

circles. 1) Zerzan developed a method of dialectical critique which is both immanent and extraneous to the phenomena that he is examining. One of the sequelae of the application of this method has been the reinvigoration of the project of philosophical anthropology. 2) EoR raises the issue of criteria as regards insurrectionary subject. Zerzan's thesis that those who have the most to lose invariably make the deepest and most radical insurrectionary breaks with the past, while empirically sound, jettisons two centuries of bad social philosophy, and 3) Zerzan argues consistently throughout the volume that violence (riot, insurrection) has been (or could be) an effective and vital force for social change, in direct contradistinction to Leftist ideology whose general stance on the issue has been a puritanical prohibition, justified by either moralism or cowardice (your choice).

In a letter I received recently, a correspondent described the critical method employed by Zerzan as an example of immanent critique. This statement, while minimally accurate, misses the mark as to where Zerzan has taken the method. Horkheimer in *The Eclipse of Reason*—immanent critique confronts, "the existent, in its historical context, with the claim of its conceptual principles, in order to realize the relationship between the two and thus transcend them." Conceptually almost intuitive, and not a particularly new nor sophisticated critical strategy, it has been employed by theorists as disparate as Marx and Voltaire. The first generation of critical theorists merely refined the technique and provided it with a philosophical and historical foundation. There are limitations to immanent critique, however, and part of Zerzan's innovative manipulation of the technique stems directly from these parameters. Immanent critique, as the name implies, situates itself firmly on the terrain of the system it seeks to examine. It is maintained by partisans of immanent critique that this is the method's greatest strength. It may also be its greatest flaw. For while holding a system to its own claims produces (or should produce) a relatively high standard of consistency and rigor, it also forces the theorist to avoid any criteria arising either from the subjective or external sources, put succinctly; in judging what is (the dominant society) one is restricted from using what is not (utopia).

Another flaw contained within immanent critique is its reliance upon the conceptual claims of the system as criteria. During the period in time that the first generation of critical theorists were writing such a mechanism worked, and well. In the current era, and as a result of the lessened expectations associated with the pronouncements of both neo-conserva-

tives and neo-liberals, the claims of capital have decreased to almost nothing. Where before the critical theorist had myriad, sweeping statements from the “best of all possible worlds,” “chicken in every pot,” grab bag to minor, work-a-day promises and statements made by bosses, politicians, and captains of industry to utilize as criteria with which to judge the behavior of the *ancien regime*. Today, even cost of living increases are threatened in collective bargaining negotiations and corporate downsizing has brought back the good old days of early capitalism including classic nineteenth century workplace phenomena such as immediate dismissal and the ten-hour workday. This ideological retrenchment has been global in scope; no one speaks anymore of the developing countries, or uses the argument that La Antigua, Guatemala or Kinshasa will one day be indistinguishable from Hoboken. The global contraction of capital has meant a concomitant contraction in its conceptual terrain, which in turn produces a decreased ability to abstract criteria and utilize them in the implementation of an immanent critical method.

Zerzan’s response to this weakening of the critique has been to unilaterally (and without asking permission) expand the method to include empirical data, historical and anthropological, to strengthen his hybrid of immanent critique. His expansion has also occasionally included subjective material, which, while architectonically indefensible, has been justified in the past by a number of other thinkers. Marcuse, in *Eros and Civilization*, not only augments the concept of reason by placing phantasy firmly within its bounds, he also makes of phantasy a motive conceptual and psychological apparatus which, for lack of a better name, may best be described as the “will to utopia.” In spite of the problems, incoherence and confusion associated with *Eros and Civilization*, the philosophical construct used in defining phantasy seems accurate and though with less intelligent or careful theorists there remains a great possibility of mischief and foolishness, it provides the serious critical theorist with a powerful tool.

Inclusion of anthropological and historical empirical data isn’t particularly earth-shattering, however, what Zerzan does with these references is to use the material as a criteria with which to judge capital and the contemporary state of the human species. Zerzan has been greatly assisted in this

project by developments in anthropology dating from the mid-1960s. Developments in this area have included discussions as disparate as the diet of the !Kung branch of the San in the Kalahari to the taxonomic differentiation between *Homo sapiens* and *Homo erectus*. Where all of this academic work has led is a complete reappraisal of pre-agricultural human society; from the classic Hobbesian view of pre-historical life as being “nasty, brutish and short,” to an understanding of pre-agricultural humanity as living an existence of singular grace, harmony, solidarity and health. The impact that these anthropological discussions have had on critical

theory are, and will continue to be, staggering. In the idealist tradition the concept of an original separation (humanity from nature, individual from society, subject from object) has always formed the foundation of its critical etiology, now anthropology has produced empirically grounded speculation of the existence of just such an event. Anthropology has also provided critical theorists with a glimpse of human life and society in that “Golden Age,” the Ur-phenomena of the species. Zerzan was the first critical theorist to put these pieces into place and he did so in general categorical discussions, as well as using the “Golden Age” to establish a set of criteria with which to judge the historical development of current social and cultural phenomena. It is this foundation which grounds his discussions of language, number, time, art and agriculture; which in turn has allowed Zerzan the freedom to stand outside the system under examination

without losing either his critical stance or effective criteria, ultimately enhancing the ability to level a withering assault on the dominant society.

One of the fascinating, and on first glance seemingly tangential, sequelae of Zerzan’s use of empirical anthropology has been to revivify the project of philosophical anthropology developed by Max Scheler, a phenomenologist associated with political Catholicism, during the first two decades of the twentieth century. For Scheler the goal of the work was to illustrate, in precise detail, how, “all the specific achievements and works of man—language, conscience, tools, weapons, ideas of right and wrong, the state, leadership, the representational function of art, myths, religion, science, history, and social life—arise from the basic structures of human existence” (*Man’s Place in Nature*, 1928). Of course, the comple-

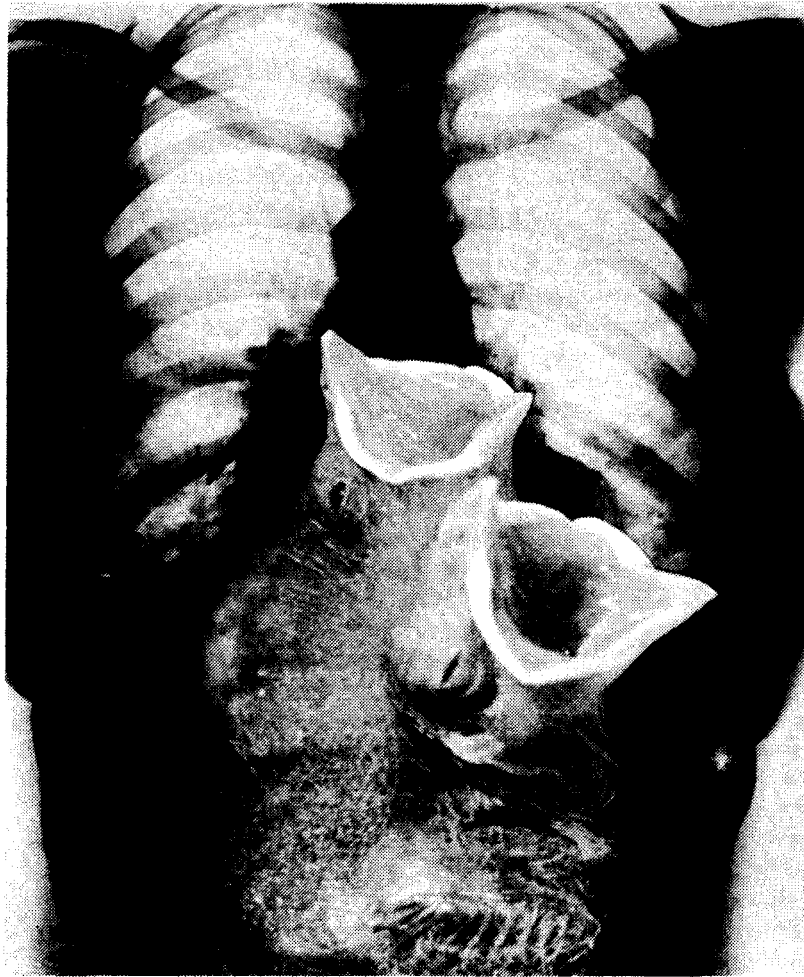
Zerzan...introduced three innovations that now form the foundation of much of the theoretical discussion in North American anarchist circles: 1) a method of dialectical critique which is both immanent and extraneous to the phenomena that he is examining... 2) EoR raises the issue of criteria as regards insurrectionary subject. Zerzan’s thesis that those who have the most to lose invariably make the deepest and most radical insurrectionary breaks with the past,...and 3) Zerzan argues...that violence (riot, insurrection) has been (or could be) an effective and vital force for social change.

tion of such a task is impossible primarily because the project assumes a static human nature divorced from historical and social circumstance. For critical theory, however, if the project and problem statement could be appropriately reformed there may be much to be learned from such an investigation. Horkheimer thought so too, and in an essay titled "Remarks on Philosophical Anthropology," he frames the project thus, "The project of modern philosophical anthropology consists in finding a norm that will provide meaning to an individual's life in the world as it currently exists." Or to be even more clear, insight into human nature should, at a minimum, inform those who criticize the present in hopes of realizing a quantitative break with it. Zerzan's theoretics address this in a negative, critical manner. Returning to the anthropological data, if the vast majority of human organization and institutions have not been characterized by language, number, time, and art then these phenomena must not be associated with satisfying basic needs and desires (human nature). Such theoretical machinations may never produce a final answer or series of answers as to what human nature is, but they do produce an outline of what human nature is not. This is critical theory fulfilling its promise; not illuminating truth, but excluding falsehood.

One of the basic tenets of the theory of opposition, at least since Babeuf's Conspiracy of Equals, has been the uncontested claim of the proletariat as revolutionary subject. Nineteenth century thought continued and refined this virtual article of faith. There were a few wafflers, Bakunin, for instance, discussed the lumpen as holding great promise as a potential revolutionary subject but in the end, and under pressure from his Swiss, artisan supporters he dropped this line of conjecture. Suffice it to say that when even apologists for reaction, Hippolyte Taine comes to mind, accept and include the danger of this new social class in their writings the point has been made and accepted; left, right and center. The proletarian gospel continues down to the situationists, who, unable to distinguish bourgeoisie from proletariat using the marxist formula based on economic class, redefined the battle lines so that order-givers morphed into bourgeois and

order-takers became revolutionary subject. The social war of the haves and the have-nots is as old and accepted as the system that produced them, which should make one wonder just how accurate the description is. Zerzan has come at the problem from a very different angle, however, and as one might expect found the whole discussion lacking in both clarity and scope. The second section of *EoR* contains essays dealing with, what one theorist in the milieu has termed, "lost history." This label seems more than appropriate, if one adds the caveat that "lost" conveys a broad enough definition to include both misplaced and disappeared into the halls of academia—never sighted again.

Zerzan's historical essays then deal with examples of riot, insurrection and physical refusal, generally. In each instance the rioters have primarily been persons of the middle classes, individuals who are small property owners, persons of some standing in their communities, and finally, individuals with a great deal to lose, and very little motive to tear their respective societies down. This general statement is applicable to participants in riots and insurrections throughout history; Luddites, Regulators, Whiskey Rebels, Rebecca and her Sisters, Captain Swing, King Mob, the Paris Commune of 1871, Makhnovists, the New York City boogie-tilla-puke party and power outage of 1977, the MLK assassination



Johann Humyn Being

riots, May '68 in France and so forth. While not all of the above events are discussed in *EoR*, investigation into these occurrences reveals similar findings as to their participants; the vast majority were employed, or employers, artisans, weavers, farmers, mechanics, sailors, officer cadets, students, merchants, tavern keepers, local elected officials; they were not solely nor even conspicuously the industrial proletariat. Throughout the historical essays in *EoR*, Zerzan makes this point, implicitly and explicitly using primary sources. Zerzan isn't the first theorist to uncover this information, Crane Brinton, a colleague of Marcuse's at the Office for Strategic Services (forerunner of the CIA), in a study of the revolutionary milieus during the Terror found that the Jacobins presented for a brief period of time the spectacle of men

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The RIOT

At present there is no conscious debate concerning mankind's finality. Mankind's goal, necessarily, is to come to an end. This is why the absence of any debate goes against this goal.

The debate about the end of humanity is the very content of history. As well, this debate alone is the criterion for what is historic and what is not. Today's lack of a debate is not only fortuitous, for human society is organized in the absence of debate, including the filling in of this real lack with the appearance of a debate. This is why those who fight this organization fight this lack. Today, this combat has been driven outside of consciousness. So completely has alienation invaded consciousness that consciousness appears to be a moment of alienation.

But while this phenomenon of history's absence becomes general in history, it cannot suppress history. On the contrary it is the debate about humanity which supersedes this phenomenon. This debate about humanity finds itself outside of consciousness, and against alienation. Alienation no doubt has invaded all mediation and all organization, but it cannot capture immediacy and spontaneity. Here is where the real debate about humanity, the world and their finality has found refuge and is concentrated. It is a practical debate where

words once again become onomatopoeia and ideas become punches. But this rough, raw, savage negativity remains the only one present.

The riot is the only practical and public moment in which alienation is criticized as the organization of society, which blocks any debate about mankind's finality. Once it is organized, a riot is no longer a riot. It is the strength and weakness of that which constitutes the only tribune for those who want to master humanity: this tribune is just a surge of life without consciousness. The riot is at present the only one of thought's activities which moves faster than alienation.

Riots are easy to recuperate, discredit or crush, except when and where they take place. In time's depths where we now find ourselves, each riot is like the awkward, angry scraping of a flint, but what results transforms coldness and obscurity into their opposite. Always too quickly swamped or stamped out, riots nonetheless are the living refusal of submission and alienation, a crowbar that opens horizons. And their limits are such that it is tempting to call them limitless. For limits like these the key of consciousness has become rusty.

Roman plebeians' riots, peasant uprisings, or nineteenth century working class riots are very different from modern

ones, contrary to what is generally assumed. It is their content which is different: a Roman senator, a feudal lord or even a nineteenth century wheeler-dealer prince could not have imagined what today reveals—that the richness of humanity has taken refuge in these poor revolts of the poor. The conditions which give rise to them are also different: they always menace the State in a world entirely divided into States; they are always urban in an entirely urbanized world. They are a battle for thought in a world in which thought has freed itself from human grasp; when there are leaders, leaders are outflanked, where there are commodities, commodity value is destroyed. Their actors are different from the past: they are anonymous. Contrary to what is generally assumed, there are no longer any manipulated riots. Potential manipulators have relinquished mastery over the world, and in leading them astray, they have lost mastery of the crowds. Whatever the number of participants, a modern riot is out of measure. Semi-literate, poor and unsatisfied, riot's enemies resemble potential rioters more than potential recuperators. But the reverse is also true: modern rioters are bursting with ideology, fear and satisfaction. And their separations, that this unique modern festival threatens to supersede, constitute their first police, as well as an end of any form of police. Last of all, more than the fear they provoke it is the immensity of the shame of what they reveal which, unlike in the past, makes it impossible to attribute them to any party. This cover of silence discredits them as well.

A riot is something very short in time, it usually lasts a few hours, rarely a few days. A riot is very localized in space, it always takes place in a city, often in just one neighborhood and often in a marginalized neighborhood. Today, rioters active in the world are only a tiny minority of the world. Separated from each other, even the account and motivations of their emotions have been relinquished to those who took no part in the riot, unless in combating them. Today it is hardly unheard of for rioters to put more faith in what they see on the news than in what their memory recalls. Almost always defeated in the streets (to the extent that many believe that the very fact of fighting is a victory, which at times contributes to their defeat), they are also defeated with respect to theorizing their beginning of a debate, thus abetting the liquidation of this debate.

Professional rioters, which are at times evoked during these liquidation campaigns, exist: but they are uniformed or plain-clothes policemen and informers. No one else is paid to be present. Rioters are amateurs: no hierarchy, no specialists. And if you run into the same rioters in different riots, that means they are real amateurs.

The rioter risks his life. Anyone judging the riot without having participated in it only runs the risk of shame. At today's going rate for shame there is no comparison between rioters and non-rioters when they express themselves. Courage and fear, which in the riot reach paroxysms that cinema and literature still attribute to wars between

States, are always abstract outside the riot, allowing those absent—the observer, the enemy—to minimize and hush it up. But when courage and fear are liberated limitlessly, other violent emotions are freed as well. And to know which ones, when it is a question of riots and not of wars between States, it is necessary to have finished reading, and get on with it. There lies the beginning of the debate about the end of the debate.

The *Bibliothèque des Émeutes* will commit no other incitement to riot. In effect, since the riot is spontaneous, we find inciting it contradictory. Consciousness cannot incite uncon-

sciousness. You don't go to a riot, you are in a riot. Today's practice of emotion, that is, taking the draining of emotions as the only limit, is either falsified as a spectacle or has fallen into modus operandi-less immediacy. The riot and the emotion of life are no longer premeditated, and this is wherein lies their poetry.

On the other hand, inciting to riot is against the law in most States of the world. That constitutes one of their lesser contradictions: today they are a principal and perpetual incitement to riot, the truth-suffocater that makes it explode.

In itself, a riot is just an intense moment that is both weightless and profound. Its inherent goal is to spread. When a riot spreads from a neighborhood to a city, and from a city to every city in a State, from one day to the next and then to an entire week, from scorn to respect, and from ignorance to universal consciousness, this is what is known as an insurrection. An insurrection which overflows State borders, which takes the totality as its goal and reveals the ground of the human dispute, is a revolution. There is no known example of a revolution which did not start with a riot.

This text, from April 1990, is the opening article in the Bulletin N° 1 of the Bibliothèque des Émeutes.

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SINCE APRIL 1990

It has been two years since a wave of riots, unprecedented in a decade, has risen throughout the world. This movement, unidentified as such, kept on growing steadily until the middle of 1991. Since the summer of 1992, it decreased continuously. Both the rise and decline of this revolt changed its own original and constitutive moment, the riot itself.

Concerning two points, the riot cannot be considered as described in the preceding text. First, it is no longer a spontaneous meeting place, where everything becomes possible. People in a riot are no longer happily surprised, they rather expect what is going to happen. More and more they "go" to a riot in little groups, more or less organized. Secondly, the media has also lost its puzzled spontaneity when faced with such events, because journalists are also attacked by rioters now and expelled from what they could only falsify. Therefore, the media either fights a riot by making it a show, a spectacle (Los Angeles, May 1992, for instance), or silences it with liquidating understatements (Los Angeles, December 1992).

On both sides of the barricades, the indecision and, to the detriment of the revolt, its potential, have diminished, since this earlier and more optimistic text. *B.E.*

Whose Unabomber?

John Zerzan

Author's note: Our condition, and that of the natural world, have worsened since the following was written two years ago. As the trial of Ted Kaczynski approaches (set to begin November 1997) we may see that more people now realize that there's a war going on.

Technogogues and technopaths we have had with us for some time. The Artificial Intelligence pioneer Marvin Minsky, for instance, was well-known in the early 1980s for his description of the human brain as "a 3 pound computer made of meat." He was featured in the December 1983 issue of *Psychology Today*, occasioning the following letter:

Marvin Minsky:

With the wholly uncritical treatment—nay, giddy embrace—of high technology, even to such excrescences as machine "emotions" which you develop and promote, *Psychology Today* has at least made it publicly plain what's intended for social life.

Your dehumanizing work is a prime contribution to high tech's accelerating motion toward an ever more artificial, de-individualized, empty landscape.

I believe I am not alone in the opinion that vermin such as you will one day be considered among the worst criminals this century has produced.

(Signed) In revulsion, John Zerzan

A dozen years later the number of those actively engaged in the desolation of the soul and the murder of nature has probably risen; but support for the entire framework of such activity has undoubtedly eroded.

Enter Unabomber (he/she/they) with a critique, in acts as well as words, of our sad, perverse, and increasingly bereft technological existence. Unabomber calls for a return to "wild nature" via the "complete and permanent destruction of modern industrial society in every part of the world," and the replacement of that impersonal, unfree, and alienated society by that of small, face-to-face social groupings. He has killed three and wounded 23 in the service of this profoundly radical vision.

There are two somewhat obvious objections to this theory and practice. For one thing, a return to undomesticated autonomous ways of living would not be achieved by the removal of industrialism alone. Such removal would still leave domination of nature, subjugation of women, war, religion, the state, and division of labor, to cite some basic social

pathologies. It is civilization itself that must be undone to go where Unabomber wants to go. In other words, the wrong turn for humanity was the Agricultural Revolution, much more fundamentally than the Industrial Revolution.

In terms of practice, the mailing of explosive devices intended for the agents who are engineering the present catastrophe is too random. Children, mail carriers and others could easily be killed. Even if one granted the legitimacy of striking at the high-tech horror show by terrorizing its indispensable architects, collateral harm is not justifiable.

Meanwhile, Unabomber operates in a context of massive psychic immiseration and loss of faith in all of the system's institutions. How many moviegoers, to be more specific, took issue with *Terminator 2* and its equating of science and technology with death and destruction? Keay Davidson's "A Rage Against Science" (*San Francisco Examiner*, 4/30/95) observed that Unabomber's "avowed hatred of science and technological trends reflects growing popular disillusionment with science."

A noteworthy example of the resonance that his sweeping critique of the modern world enjoys is "The Evolution of Despair" by Robert Wright, cover story of *Time* for August 28, 1995. The long article discusses Unabomber's indictment soberly and sympathetically, in an effort to plumb "the source of our pervasive sense of discontent."

At the same time, not surprisingly, other commentators have sought to minimize the possible impact of such ideas. "Unabomber Manifesto Not Particularly Unique" is the dismissive summary John Schwartz provided for the August 20, '95 *Washington Post*. Schwartz found professors who would loftily attest to the unoriginality of fundamental questioning of society, as if anything like that goes on in classrooms. Ellul, Juenger and others with a negative view of technology are far from old hat; they are unknown, not a part of accepted, respectable discourse. The cowardice and dishonesty typical of professors and journalists could hardly be more clearly represented.

Also easily predictable has been the antipathy to Unabomber-type ideas from the liberal-left. "Unabomber" was Alexander Cockburn's near-hysterical denunciation in *The Nation*, August 28/September 4 '95. This pseudo-critic of U.S. capitalism rants about Unabomber's "homicidal political nuttiness," the fruit of an "irrational" American anarchist tradition. Cockburn says that Unabomber represents a "rotted-out romanticism of the individual and of nature," that nature is gone forever and we'd better accept its extinction. In reply to this effort to vilify and marginalize both

Unabomber and anarchism, Bob Black points out (unpublished letter to the editor) the worldwide resurgence of anarchism and finds Unabomber expressing "the best and the predominant thinking in contemporary North American anarchism, which has mostly gotten over the workerism and productivism which it too often used to share with Marxism."

In spring '95 Earth First! spokesperson Judy Bari labeled Unabomber "a sociopath," going on to declare, definitively but mistakenly, that "there is no one in the radical environmental movement who is calling for violence." This is not the place to adequately discuss the politics of radical environmentalism, but Bari's pontificating sounds like the voice of the many anarcho-liberals and anarcho-pacifists who wish to go no further in defense of the wild than tired, ineffective civil disobedience, and who brandish such timid and compromised slogans as "no deforestation without representation."

The summer '95 issue of *Slingshot*, tabloid of politically correct Berkeley militants, contained a brief editorial trashing Unabomber for creating "the real danger of government repression" of the radical milieu. The fear that misplaces blame on Unabomber overlooks the simple fact that any real blows against the Megamachine will invite responses from our enemies. The specter of repression is most effectively banished by doing nothing.

For their part, the "anarchists" of *Love and Rage* (August/September '95) have also joined the anti-Unabomber leftist chorus. Wayne Price's "Is the Unabomber an Anarchist?" concedes, with Bob Black, that "most anarchists today do not regard the current development of industrial technology as 'progressive' or even 'neutral,' as do Marxists and liberals." But after giving this guarded lip-service to the ascendancy of Unabomber-like ideas, Price virulently decries Unabomber as "a murderer dragging noble ideas through the mud" and withholds even such political and legal support that he would accord authoritarian leftists targeted by the state. *Love and Rage* is defined by a heavy-handed, manipulative organize-the-masses ideology; approaches that are more honest and more radical are either ignored or condemned by these politicians.

But this selective mini-survey of opposition to Unabomber does not by any means exhaust the range of responses. There are other perspectives, which have mainly, for obvious reasons, been expressed only privately. Some of us, for one thing, have found a glint of hope in the public appearance, at last, of a challenge to the fundamentals of a depraved landscape. In distinction to the widespread feeling that everything outside of the self is beyond our control, the monopoly of lies has been broken. It might be said that Unabomber's (media) impact is here today, only to be

forgotten tomorrow. But at least a few will have been able to understand and remember. The irony, of course, is that lethal bombings were necessary for an alternative to planetary and individual destruction to be allowed to be heard.

The concept of justice should not be overlooked in considering the Unabomber phenomenon. In fact, except for his targets, when have the many little Eichmanns who are preparing the Brave New World ever been called to account? Where is any elementary personal responsibility when the planners of our daily and global death march act with complete impunity?

The number of those actively engaged in the desolation of the soul and the murder of nature has probably risen; but support for the entire framework of such activity has undoubtedly eroded. Enter Unabomber...with a critique, in acts as well as words, of our sad, perverse, and increasingly bereft technological existence.

The ruling order rewards such destroyers and tries to polish their image. The May 21, 1995 *New York Times Magazine's* "Unabomber and David Gelernter" humanizes the latter, injured by a Unabomber bomb at Yale, as a likable computer visionary preparing a "Renaissance of the human spirit." From no other source than the article itself, however, it is clear that Gelernter is helping to usher in an authoritarian dystopia based on all the latest high-tech vistas, like genetic engineering.

Is it unethical to try to stop those whose contributions are bringing an unprecedented assault on life? Or is it unethical to just accept our passive roles in the current zeitgeist of postmodern cynicism and know-nothingism? As a friend in California put it recently, when justice is against the law, only outlaws can effect justice.

The lengthy Unabomber manuscript will go undiscussed here; its strengths and weaknesses deserve separate scrutiny. These remarks mainly shed light on some of the various, mostly negative commentary rather than directly on their object. It is often the case that one can most readily learn about society by watching its reactions, across the spectrum, to those who would challenge it.

"Well, I believe in FC/Unabomber—it's all over the country...his ideas are, as the situationists said, 'in everyone's heads'; it's just a matter of listening to yer own rage," from a Midwesterner in the know. Or as Anne Eisenberg, from Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, admitted, "Scratch most people and you'll get a Luddite."

And from the *Boulder Weekly*, Robert Perkinson's July 6, '95 column sagely concluded: "Amidst the overwhelming madness of unbridled economic growth and postmodern disintegration, is such nostalgia, or even such rage, really crazy? For many, especially those who scrape by in unfulfilling jobs and peer longingly toward stars obscured by beaming street lights, the answer is probably no. And for them, the Unabomber may not be a psychopathic demon. They may wish FC the best of luck."

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Beaubourg: FUTURE CANCER?

Jacques Camatte

Whether as a trick, a diversion, or core-work within a well-established project, the Beaubourg Cultural Center occupies a point where a number of phenomena converge. Its existence is significative of the transformation of the community of capital. All that cannot be considered here. I will restrict myself to pointing out some fundamental parallels between art and capital.¹

Art developed at the moment when human beings were separated from their community. There was no art in the long prehistory preceding that event. The term isolates the materialization of a cognitive means for people to represent their world, from which they weren't separated. It was part of a nonabstracted knowledge, that is, not presented solely through abstraction, as occurred later. It was what Leroi-Gourhan called a drifting knowledge:² a radiant, multidimensional thought in sympathy with its surroundings, since the break hadn't yet occurred. So, in contemporary terms, this art was simultaneously language, science, magic, ritual, etc. At the same time it was part of a whole that it recognized and to which it gave signification.

After the break art was to become the means for recreating the old community, the "Lost Totality." With the loss of immediate coherence, art was the mediation reestablishing communication. This search for the lost community is clear in Greek theater, opera, cinema, and the attempts to realize total art (even in happenings), even if it no longer appears in such terms to those doing them. It's not just art as the sum of the artistic actions trying to reaffirm a whole, it's each particular art that rushes into this endeavor. It's as if each wanted to reorder the whole and reform it from itself, involving a reconstitution from a certain viewpoint and understanding; for linearization began

as soon as the "radiant phenomenon" was destroyed, because of the break and the autonomization of the parts constituting the original whole. Attempts at reconstitution failed to stop this, since they began from a separated part. It's impossible to catapult oneself straight into another community. But it's the only starting point for rediscovering radiant thought.

Nostalgia for lost community is most obvious at times of appearance of art derived from opposition between two moments in human history in a well-determined area. Examples are the oppositions between matriarchy and patriarchy³ in Greek tragedy, and feudalism and nascent bourgeois society returning to the old models (Renaissance). A common characteristic is that it's the defeated parts that produced art (such as provincials or American southerners), as if art is all the more glorious when attached to something irredeemably lost. So for some art would be a consolation for the defeated, ignoring its affirmation not of the defeat but of creation or maintenance of a possibility, a refusal of the diktat of realism and the reality principle.

Secularization happens at the same time. Loss of the sacred leads art to take nature as its model. In reaction it is equally the place of its conservation. The heresies have survived through art.

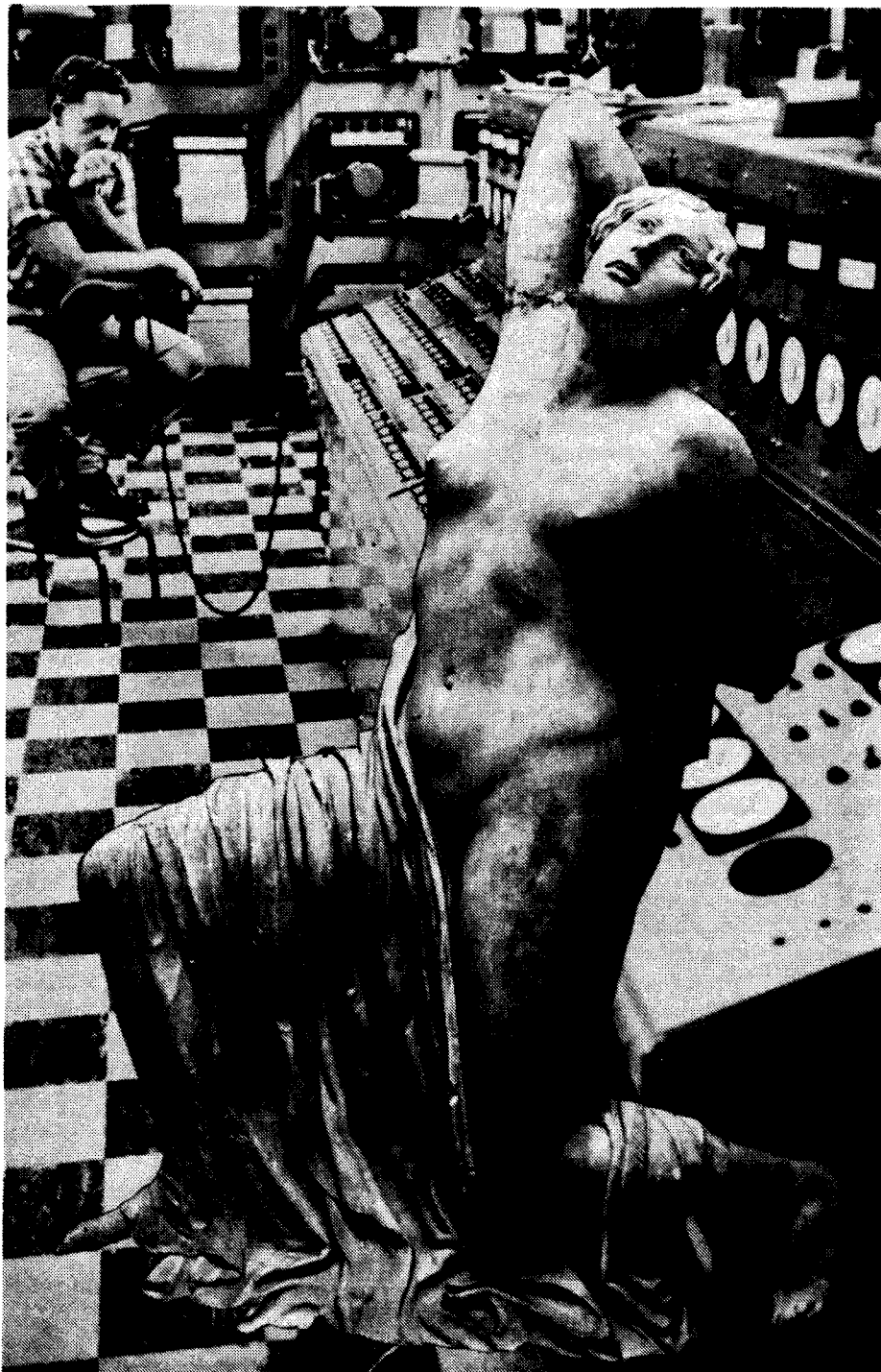
At the time of capital's formal domination over society, art could remain outside it and accomplish its anti-bourgeois function. As it happened, it was anticapitalist, for the bourgeoisie historically needed art to impose itself on the world, as it was a class that exalted it.

This opposition continued until the attempt by the Dada movement to link up with the revolution then occurring in Germany. This simultaneously admitted that no separated activity could reorganize a totality or be a starting point for another community. Nonetheless artists

at that time showed more insight than revolutionaries,⁴ because their proclamation of the death of art was linked to their perception of the end of a world, the old bourgeois society, because of the passage from formal to real domination of capital, which occurred over several years (notably 1914–45). At the turn of the century, painters had already anticipated capital's development in breaking all reference to nature and in discovering that everything is possible.

The Futurists were the first to entirely and methodically reject the hegemony of cultural stereotypes. Once the social barriers were abolished, the masses—for whom the quantitative appeared as the new twentieth-century determinant—would have to organize the world differently. The new dynamism and its collective nature made it transgress the old social categories and imposed an active transformative logic already foreseen by Marx. So the world no longer appears as inevitability but as a collection of possibilities. In the euphoria of this new freedom, experienced in several areas of contemporary intellectual life, classes and noble subjects vanished from the collection of social relations. (One of the things passing through this breach was totalitarian practice.)

Now, "Everything is possible" is capital's fundamental characteristic. It's essentially revolutionary because it destroys obstacles impeding development and eliminates taboos and congealed mimesis: all are put back into question and into movement. (Taboos that cannot be lifted are exteriorized and consumed in representation, for example, the incest taboo and psychoanalysis.) If capital (under its modern as well as antiquated forms) thus became definite by taking over the immediate production process, this was due to the confluence between the movements of exchange value's autonomization and



Johann Humyn Being

peoples' expropriation. It could successfully pass to its real domination over society only at another moment, because of confluence between its nature and the deep desires of people separated from their community and stripped of divine and natural referents. In accomplishing this even the implied consequences could be forgotten: desire becoming all the grander and imperious the more people are desubstantialized and alienated.

The restricted man or woman, separated

from everything, wishes to reconstitute everything from potentialities, beginning the opening of the field of applied science. For a time, the referent could still be the individual human being, until capital's anthropomorphosis, when it realized its real domination over society and established itself as representation (and therefore as referent). This reconstitutes the splintered person, who is ever more enslaved. So what Eliade said relates only to the initial moment:

The nihilism of the early revolutionaries and nihilists represent attitudes already surpassed in modern Art. No great artist of our times believes in the degeneracy and imminent disappearance of his/her art. From this point of view, their attitude resembles that of the "primitives": they have contributed to the destruction of their world and their artistic universe—in order to create another one.⁵

Not only has the natural referent been destroyed and another world created, but the very forms coming from the previous great destructive movement have themselves been destroyed (especially in Picasso).⁶ This again resembles capital's movement, which is impeded by substantialization and must avoid becoming fixed. Eliade continues in an equally illuminating way:

It's significant that the destruction of artistic language coincided with the development of psychoanalysis. Depth Psychology brought renewal of interest in origins, an interest characteristic of people in archaic society. A close study of the process of re-evaluation of the myth of the end of the world in modern Art would be interesting. It would be found that artists, far from being the neurotics they are often called, are, on the contrary, psychologically more sane than many modern people.⁷ They've understood that a true beginning can come only after a true end. And artists were the first moderns to apply themselves to destroying their world,⁸ to recreate an artistic universe in which people could simultaneously live, observe and dream.⁹

The world created since the 1920s is actually one in which people have decreasing importance and significance, because psychoanalysis has deprived them of these qualities: the various qualities of the psyche have been exteriorized and transformed into representations.¹⁰ The artistic universe created is metaphorically that of capital. Such is Beaubourg: the idealized and ideal factory, industrial revelation and capital, presenting itself as art. The subject becomes art itself, completely realizing it, going beyond its reconciliation with life.

Baubourg reabsorbs the dimension of art as nostalgia for the past, since it is a museum, a place for hoarding (the old form of behavior of exchange value become capital). Since exhibitions of contemporary painting are held in it,¹¹ it's also the place where credit is obtained. As Cailloix¹² justly remarked,

credit invades art: "When execution is replaced by credit, by a blank check, Art finds itself reduced to derisory size and, at the extreme, disappears. It disappears by becoming almost the opposite idea."

This is evident since, to the extent that there remain no concrete representations and referents through which people could come together again, it's clear that the important thing will be the individual's credit, whether accorded spontaneously or through the influence of advertising (something becoming important in art).¹³ Now, credit is the means of appraisal and behavior in the material community of capital, which is partly instituted through generalization of credit. With inflation this becomes capital's confidence in itself. The same process rules over the whole human environment. People disconnected from their old relationships, referents, and sentiments can only reconstruct their "unity" and social relationships through external mechanisms such as advertising, criticism, etc. (It's no longer possible to speak of community, since it's that of capital in every case).

Progressive abstraction is bound to the loss of the general referent (general equivalent). This implies that there's not just abstraction but also its autonomization. So it becomes practically synonymous with the arbitrary: "The arbitrary here is basically the absence of all justification" (Cailloix), a kind of gratuitous act (so Gide's theory isn't without historical significance). Paradoxically, the gratuitous is real for others only through appearance of the credit bestowed by justified significance or significant justification. Obviously this has a clear relationship to the saturation of the art market at the end of the last century, which meant that new openings had to be found. The picture could be decomposed even to the extent that unprepared canvas would be put forward as the artwork, a work with multiple possibilities. But that is but an effect of the phenomenon, since it too would have to lead to the demand for the end of art.

That death arrived. Nevertheless, art still exists. It no longer has anything to do with what was previously understood by the term. And those wanting to revive Dada's project can only carry out a "murder of the dead."¹⁴ Capital's art is knowledge of capital. It's a way to

achieve knowledge of the new world it has created, in which the sacred, nature, men and women exist only behind death masks.

As Cailloix emphasized, the ridiculous often accompanies the arbitrary. It cannot fully realize itself or else the capitalization of the pictures produced would cease, putting an end to hoarding and ruining many people, and also breaking down many museographical institutions. The ridiculous corresponds to the disappeared and ephemeral, things affected by present-day capitalism. Here the same forms are again found: capital too cannot really eliminate hoarding, gold, and the past and create itself, so to speak, *ex nihilo*. Basically it can only escape the past by running away from it: inflation.

Here we encounter capital's essential "project": it must dominate the future or else its power would be put back into question and its domination wouldn't be real. This is already present in the concept of capital, but can only be achieved at a given moment in its "life."¹⁵

Consequently, there can no longer be a specific anticipation and abstraction of the heart of a totality (a perceived abstraction) by which to perceive the distinctive and significant parts. Initially the future is produced; there is as much imagination as possible; reality and image are fused.¹⁶ The imposed image invades everything, to the extent that it isn't yet produced with its reality. In effect, capital needed its own image to be able to implant itself within the socioeconomic whole and to dominate it. It then had to annex all images and, to confirm its domination, eradicate their presuppositions and replace them with its own.

So the factory becomes indispensable—art having to be produced from art and artists in a manner amenable to capital. For what matters is to touch the mass of human beings (otherwise there would be no realization of art)¹⁷ who still haven't internalized capital's lifestyle, who are still more or less bound to certain rhythms, practices, superstitions, etc., and who (even if they have taken up the vertigo of capital's rhythm of life) don't necessarily utilize its image, and therefore live a contradiction or jarring, and are constantly exposed to "future shock."

Everything must be understood

through capital's image. Such is Beaubourg's function: a carcinoma, a neoplasm that must divert the aesthetic flux into domination of the future. It will create roles to that end. This carcinoma will overrun everything and secrete its metastases everywhere. No individual encountering Beaubourg will remain unaltered: his/her image will be reoriented, reordered, or completely transformed (all the more when taken in the totality) through exposure to living in anticipation.

Beaubourg is the future cancer. It organizes the destruction of art extolled by Dada and, to the extent that culture is presented as nature, deprives human beings of any possibility of escape. This is all the more true because of the need for nature powerfully affirmed since 1968: it has to be diverted toward a wholly formed, dominated, and programmed nature, magically capturing all revolt.¹⁸

Beaubourg's role isn't annihilation of all revolt (at least not immediately), since, as has been said, one of art's sources rises from the clash between two historical moments. The integration-realization of art by capital implies its integration of revolt. It will be absorbed. Better: revolt will be declared insignificant and a more total rebellion proposed to the individual, drowning him/her in revolutionary possibilities because there are no reference points and he/she is disowned. Revolt can no longer begin from the individual and his/her released possibilities; the being can no longer give structure to his/her revolt, for enjoyment is always the basic model: always promised but never attained, because it's always deferred....

So even if painters, musicians, and poets arrived at an intuition of elements of the human community, they could do so only to the extent that they accepted work at a center like Beaubourg. It provides the possibility to reinvigorate the image of capital, which swamps everything, even if this is to pervert it, since it is the great "embezzler" (*détourneur*).

Capital's future lies in the complete uprooting of all kinds of people, so that they're completely liberated and can be moved in any direction whatsoever, to do whatever they're told to do. It will amount to human life without human beings, just as cancer (the high point of

alienation) is life excluding the life of the being in which it developed. But simultaneously it is the ultimate vital reaction of a body afflicted with a bizarre life, as much on the nutritional as the affective or intellectual plane, for cancer is caused by no microbe, virus, or pathogenic agent. It's caused by the wandering of humanity and is the typical human sickness under the domination of capital, which is also a product of the great wandering. No therapeutic like reformism or revolution can cure the human species, only the abandonment of the crazy dynamic it's been following.

I'm well aware that many people consider that I'm making capital into an entity, a mysterious being outside human beings, while I'm simply showing that it realizes a human project (domination over nature), through the process of anthropomorphosis. They also deny that my description of development is correct and recall what Eliade said concerning the creation of an artistic universe: that people could change a movement; that they could divert what is now moving toward destruction, reification, etc.... They don't actually recognize that sooner or later they will be reduced to saying "I didn't want that" like those intellectuals who initially supported fascism. It's unfortunate that, if truth is an unveiling, for many it happens only retrospectively. Nevertheless, even this retrospect already displays many facets that all indicate a single reality. Even the blindest must recognize that it's necessary to abandon this world which is so congenial to the future cancer, the inevitable promise of abominable events. (March, 1977)

NOTES:

For example, it would clearly be necessary to study Beaubourg's importance with regard to the organization of space and urbanization (i.e., the mineralization of organic nature). Nor am I considering similar phenomena already under way in other countries, especially the U.S.A.

2. See *Le Geste et La Parole* (1964). No particular passage is cited since the entire book must be not only read but studied.

3. These terms are used for simplification and to avoid long theoretical digressions on the nature of the human groupings in the Greece of Aeschylus and Euripides.

4. This statement should be tempered by consideration of the Anarchist movement at the turn of the century, which, in its terrorist and negationist tendencies, declared the wish to speed up this end, avoid decomposition, drag the masses from the listlessness induced by democracy, and build afresh.

5. See *Aspects du Mythe* (1962, pp. 93-94).

6. See Cailloix's "Picasso the Liquidator" (*Le Monde*, 28/11/75) and the ensuing polemics.

7. Nevertheless, can't they be said to be more sensitive to human pathology, in the sense that they've had a more shocking glimpse of the result of the wandering?

8. Eliade was far ahead in reporting a discovery announced by Attali in "Noise": that music anticipates social development. And what goes for music goes for all the arts. That's a commonplace. Its interest is that Attali makes himself the recuperator of its "noise" and poses as mediator of capital. What's he actually telling us?

"A new theory of power and a new politics are needed. Both require the elaboration of a politics of noise and, more subtly, an explosion in the capacity to create order starting from each individual's noise, beyond the channelling of pleasure into the norm."

For him, it's a matter of listening—as is the case for the current ecological demands—in order to recuperate the various "noises" to ensure the survival of theory, power, and politics. It's worrying that, to allow scientific comparison, he still wants to reduce us...to noises!

9. It shouldn't be forgotten that Western art accomplished this destruction-creation by plundering so-called "primitive" peoples: American Indians and Africans. This is another aspect of capital's "rejuvenation" which I described in *Invariance* Vol. 2 No. 6 in "Working Theses on Communist Revolution."

10. Let us add that the mediation of pedagogy and ethology means that the world of childhood and early moments in the life of our species are also affected. In particular, with regard to childhood, it has allowed the creation of an industry of playthings and products "specific" to children, who were excluded from their life and creation. The moment when "Homo Ludens" (Huizinga) is discovered is that when humans are increasingly robbed of play.

11. By simultaneously incorporating museum and experimental center, Beaubourg realizes one of Toffler's projects: the establishment of past communities to allow those unable to follow power's rhythm to get their bearings, and future communities for those living only through anticipation (see *Future Shock*).

The incorporation of a Center of Contemporary Architecture plagiarizes Voyer's "Institute of Contemporary Prehistory." Briefly, the presence of experimental centers indicates a wish to fuse science and art. More precisely, what is seen here reinforces an already distinct philosophical tendency: the loss of autonomy. Art and philosophy follow in science's wake in order to produce something. They become commentaries on science, hermeneutics.

12. See "Picasso the Liquidator," an article to which I will return later.

13. Later it will be necessary to investigate fashion and advertising, considering them as forms for creating and representing the world of capital.

14. The title of an article by Bordiga, in which he showed that capital can only regenerate itself by destroying all dead, accumulated labor which impedes its process of valorization-capitalization.

15. See *Invariance* Vol. 2 No. 6: "Here is the fear, jump here."

16. One thus goes beyond abstract art, the mo-

ment of intuition of the basic elements of the community of capital, which had hardly yet appeared. This can now be represented in its totality, so realism is possible. This shows the extent to which Socialist Realism is bound to an ideological perspective and not to a social movement. The Soviet leaders don't realize to what extent abstract art (as well as other recent Western art) represents a reality. Their fear of this kind of art is actually a fear of the subversive in capital, that "Everything is possible," which could be easily diverted in a society in which the capitalist mode of production has great difficulty implanting itself. So the Soviets are condemned to understand only the despotism of capital, without ever "enjoying" its revolutionary liberating aspect. This explains the pro-Western views of elements in the present-day USSR "intelligentsia."

Leroi-Gourhan's statement concerning figuration, very clear in the USSR, is also vital. I'm drawing attention to it, and will eventually return to it, since it concerns the specificity of the whole human phenomenon, and the biological madness afflicting humanity in particular.

The crisis of Figuration is the corollary of the mastery of machinism.... It's particularly striking to observe that, in societies excluding Science and Work from the metaphysical plane, the greatest efforts are made to save figuralism.... In fact it seems that an equilibrium as constant as that co-ordinating the roles of figuration and technique cannot be destroyed without putting the very sense of the human adventure into question.

A simple remark: as I suggested above, capital could very well reintroduce figuralism. But, again, it's no longer art as human referent (nor has it been so for some time) but the art of capital.

17. On this subject, I can but raise a matter of great theoretical and historical breadth: that of the continual degradation, the reification-extraneization linked with the massification-democratization taking place down the millennia. Progress is often justified by saying that it gave something formerly restricted to a limited circle of individuals to ever-increasing numbers of people. In saying this, what is forgotten is the complementary process of loss of the sacred, nature, and humanity (e.g., in the sense of an art of life in society such as that in the eighteenth century) leading to desubstantialization of human beings and their reduction to transient, insignificant beings. It's the undeniable existence of this process that explains the pregnancy of the aristocratic critique and a certain form of art, as well as the Nazi lucubrations.

Let us also add that the hope that "the masses would have to organize the world differently" was largely disappointed, and that this draws us to the question of the proletariat's historic mission and the illusion that this class could divert the development of productive forces in a human way. These masses haven't been able to organize: capital did it instead and organized them at the same time. So the solution no longer lies in elites or masses!

18. Capital must provoke and reinvent revolt, therefore organize it, and perfectly realize the spectacle as described by the Situationist International. The separation between actors and spectators tends to disappear, because the spectacle must be worked by all human beings set in motion by some "master illusionists" (Leroi-Gourhan, *Le Geste et la Parole*), mediators of capital.

Guy Debord, 1968

The Situationist Years

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something if it exercises its power.

For the last 48 hours even the capacity of the General Assembly to make decisions has been challenged by a systematic obstruction of all proposals for action.

Up until now no motion could be voted on or even discussed, and bodies elected by the General Assembly (Occupation Committee and Coordinating Committee) see their work sabotaged by pseudo-spontaneous groups.

All the debates on organization, which people wanted to argue about before any action, are pointless if we do nothing.

AT THIS RATE, THE MOVEMENT WILL BE BURIED IN THE SORBONNE!

The prerequisite of direct democracy is the minimum support that revolutionary students can give to revolutionary workers who are occupying their factories.

It is inexcusable that yesterday evening's incidents in the General Assembly should pass without retaliation.

The priests are holding us back when anti-clerical posters are torn up.

The bureaucrats are holding us back when, without even giving their names, they paralyze the revolutionary awareness that can take the movement forward from the barricades.

Once again, it's the future that's being sacrificed in the re-establishment of the old unionism.

Parliamentary cretinism wants to take over the rostrum as it tries to put the old, patched-up system back on its feet again.

Comrades,

The reform of the university alone is insignificant when the whole of the old world should be destroyed.

The movement is nothing if it is not revolutionary.

The best picture we have of Debord and his comrades at this point comes from these tracts, which were being issued one after the other. At 5:00 P.M. the Occupation Committee issued the tract "Watch Out!"

The Press Committee situation on the second floor, stair C, in the Gaston Azard library, represents only itself. It happens to be a case of a dozen or so student journalists anxious to prove themselves straight away to their future employers and future censors.

The Committee, which is trying to monopolize all contact with the Press, refuses to transmit the communiques of the regularly elected bodies of the General Assembly.

The Press Committee is a Censorship Committee: don't have anything more to do with it.

The various committees, commissions, working parties can approach the Agence France Presse directly on 508-45-40 or the various newspapers:

Le Monde: 770 91 29

France-Soir: 508 28 00

Combat: leave a message with Robert Toubon, CEN 81 11.

The various working parties can, while waiting for this evening's General Assembly where new decisions will be taken, address themselves to the Occupation Committee and the Coordinating Committee elected by the General Assembly yesterday evening.

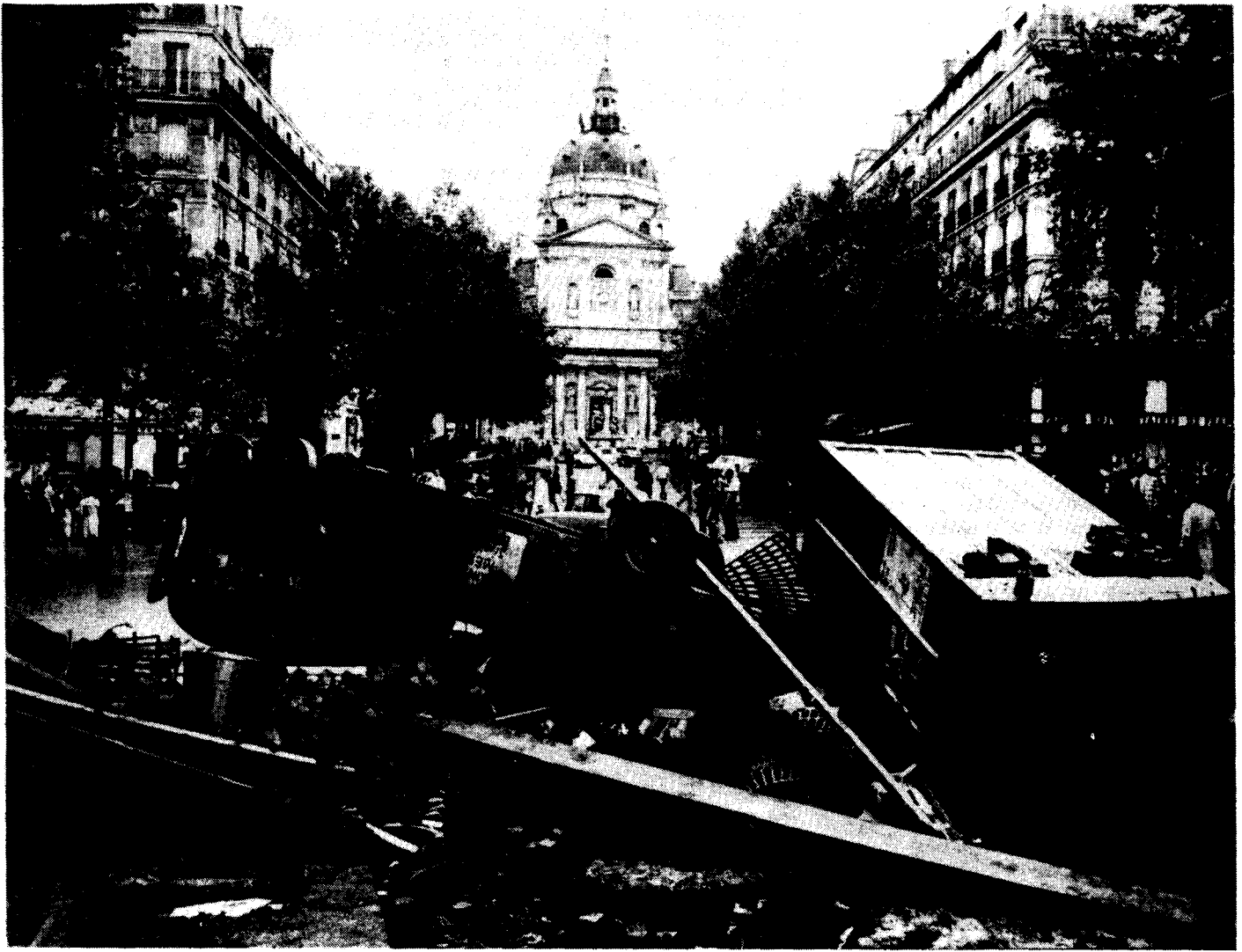
EVERYBODY COME TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIS EVENING IN ORDER TO THROW OUT THE BUREAUCRATS:

At 6:30 P.M. on May 16, the Occupation Committee issued yet another tract "Watch Out for Manipulators! Watch Out for Bureaucrats!" that underscored the importance of the General Assembly that evening. The central issue for the Occupation Committee was to have the General Assembly vote on the Occupation Committee's appeal for the occupation of all factories. At 7 P.M., the Occupation Committee issued nine slogans ("Abolish Class Society," "Death to the Cops," etc.) to be spread by all means possible. Despite the Occupation Committee's desire to press its case before the General Assembly, it decided to delay the meeting due to the call by leftist groups to march on the Renault factory at Billancourt. In a statement issued just before 8 P.M., the Occupation Committee postponed the General Assembly meeting to 2 P.M. on May 17.

The unions and government warned the students against the march on Billancourt, but the students made the trek under red and black flags anyway. The C.G.T. (the union federation) effectively prevented almost all contact between workers and students. The plan on the part of the student union and other groups was to carry out the Enragé-Situationist plan to march on the government-owned radio and TV station, following the example of Hungary 1956. But on the night of May 16, "manipulators" managed to muck everything up. When most of the students were marching on Billancourt, the manipulators at the Sorbonne tried to call a general assembly. Delegates of the Occupation Committee denounced the meeting and the assembly disbanded.

The next day, May 17, the Occupation Committee sent volunteers to support subway strikers and printed a tract by young Renault workers who supported the strike (against the union). The Occupation Committee also sent numerous poignant and humorous telegrams around the world that, while being pro-councilist, were also pro-anarchist. Many striking workers came to the Sorbonne and the General Assembly of 2 P.M. was crowded and chaotic. The only issue discussed at any length was another march on Billancourt. The General Assembly of 8 P.M. was controlled by people who prevented the Occupation Committee from discussing its activities, for which it was still seeking a mandate. Viénet states that the Occupation Committee didn't want to get more involved in the power struggles and compromises; and "announced that it was leaving the Sorbonne, where direct democracy was being strangled by the bureaucrats." The Situationists realized that they were blocked by the students and militants who only wanted a reform of the university.

The Enragés, Situationists and forty others formed the C.M.D.O. (Council for Maintaining the Occupations), a "councilist" organization rather than a "council" proper. The goal wasn't a Situationist power grab, but the promotion of autonomous organizations. The C.M.D.O., initially taking residence in the National Pedagogic Institute on the rue d'Ulm, was an uninterrupted general assembly that guaranteed egalitarian participation in debates. Three commissions were organized—the Printing Commission (publication and printing of C.M.D.O. publications), the Liaison Commission (ten cars and drivers to maintain contacts with occupied factories), the Requisitions Commission (to get supplies). On May 19, the C.M.D.O. published its "Report on the Occupation of the Sorbonne" and on May 22, "For the Power of



The day after street fighting in Paris, May '68. (from *Leaving the 20th Century*).

Workers' Councils." All of the C.M.D.O. publications are reproduced in Viénet's book. The major tracts, which would certainly include the "Address to All Workers" (May 30), had print runs of 150,000 to 200,000—impossible without the help of workers from occupied print shops. The Situationists took great pride in the fact that nothing in these tracts glorified, or even mentioned the Situationist International. Above all, these tracts called for worker autonomy. At the end of May, the C.M.D.O. moved to the basement of the School of Decorative Arts where it designed six striking posters composed of white letters on a black background. But none of these exemplary works (translated and published simultaneously in Italy, Japan, Denmark, Sweden, Portugal and Czechoslovakia when the Russian troops reestablished order after the Prague Spring) capture the spirit of the activity of the C.M.D.O. as one of the songs they composed:

THE COMMUNE'S NOT DEAD

At the barricades of Gay-Lussac,
The Enragés at our head,
We unleashed the attack:
Oh bloody hell, what a party!
We were in ecstasy amongst the cobblestones
Seeing the old world go up in flames.

CHORUS: All that has shown, Carmela,
That the Commune's not dead (repeat)

To brighten things up, the combatants,
Fucking set fire to cars:
One match and, Forward!
Poetry written in petrol.
And you should have seen the C.R.S.
Really get their asses burnt!

(chorus)

Politicized, the *blousons noirs*,
Seized the Sorbonne,
To help them fight and destroy,
They put no faith in anybody.
Theory was realized,
The shops were looted

(chorus)

What you produce belongs to you,
It's the bosses who are the thieves.
They are taking the piss out of you,
When they make you pay in the shops.
While waiting for self-management,
We'll apply the critique of the brick.

(chorus)

All the parties, the unions,
And their bureaucrats,
Oppress the proletariat,
As much as the bourgeoisie
Against the state and its allies,
Let's form workers' councils.

(chorus)

The Occupation Committee,
Spits on Trotskyists,
Maoists and other prats,
Who exploit the strikers.
Next time there'll be blood split,
By the enemies of freedom.

(chorus)

Now that the insurgents
Have gone back to survival.
Boredom, forced labor,
And ideologies,
We'll take pleasure in sowing
Other May flowers to be picked one day.

FINAL CHORUS: All that has shown, Carmela,
That the Commune's not dead (repeat)

Aside from the reports of the C.M.D.O.'s relations with other councilist organizations that come down to us from Viénet and the unattributed essay "The Beginning of an Era" in *Situationist International* #12 (the authorship of all the anonymous articles in issues 10, 11 and 12 was later claimed by Debord) not much else is known about the activity of the C.M.D.O. Certainly, a great deal of energy went into trying to establish links with other councilist organizations: "And the strikers' participation in the links established by the C.M.D.O. in and outside Paris never contradicted their presence at their own work places (nor, to be sure, in the streets)." It's easy to imagine the C.M.D.O. sitting around drinking wine and singing their songs, but the record shows that they were quite busy communicating with revolutionary groups inside and outside of France. Yet not even Viénet's eyewitness account paints a vivid picture of the C.M.D.O. camped out in the basement of the School of Decorative Arts or distributing their tracts and posters around Paris.

Back to the big picture: Georges Seguy (on behalf of the workers) and Prime Minister Georges Pompidou negotiated the Grenelle Accords (named after the Parisian street) at the end of May. This agreement was rejected by the base of workers and no-one went back to work. The communists and union federations picked up on this and tried to get behind a "popular government." De Gaulle responded by saying that he would maintain power by all means, including civil war. The army was deployed around Paris and the bourgeoisie marched in support of the government. At this point, the communist party was behind the strike movement and reportedly wanted to bring down the Gaullist regime, but they were actually just as much appeasers as the unions. The last C.M.D.O. tract "It's Not Over!" was issued on June 8, 1968—it attacked the unions, the communists and democratic socialists for trying to position themselves to win the next electoral campaign after the strike. The tract ends with emblematic slogans such as: "The emancipation of workers will be the creation of workers themselves or it will not happen." Repression, effected by the military in the streets

of Paris, became increasingly severe; and by the second week of June people began to go back to work. The Odeon and Sorbonne were evacuated by the police on June 14 and 16.

The C.M.D.O. dissolved on June 15, and the most compromised Situationists went into exile in Brussels. This retreat was a source of pride for the Situationists. Given the fact that many of the C.M.D.O. had been arrested during the course of the revolution, it is fairly amazing that the Situationists escaped the dragnet. The official Situationist interpretation of the revolution is expressed in Debord's "The Beginning of an Era" (*Situationist International* #12):

Since the defeat of the occupations movement, both those who participated in it and those who had to endure it have often asked the question: 'Was it a revolution?' The general use in the press and in daily conversation of the cowardly neutral phrase, 'the events,' is nothing but a way of evading answering or even formulating this question. Such a question must be placed in its true historical light. In this context the journalists' and governments' superficial references to the 'success' or 'failure' of a revolution mean nothing for the simple reason that since the bourgeois revolutions *no revolution has yet succeeded*: not one has abolished classes.

In this light, the S.I. did submit its own activity to a self-critique, but these shortcomings were negligible.

The main points that the Situationists stressed were:

1. May '68 was the first wildcat general strike in history.
2. May '68 was the largest strike to stricken an advanced industrial country.
3. The revolutionary goals were more radical, modern and explicitly expressed than any previous revolutionary movement.
4. May '68 was NOT a student protest, but a proletarian revolution.
5. This proletariat was enlarged to include white-collar workers, delinquents, unemployed, high school kids and young hoods.
6. May '68 was a revolutionary festival that contained within it, a generalized critique of all alienations.

One truly amazing aspect of May '68 was the way the protest encircled the globe. Saturday May 11, 50,000 students and workers marched on Bonn, and 3,000 protesters in Rome. On May 14, students occupied the University of Milan. A sit-in at the University of Miami on May 15. Scuffles at a college in Florence on May 16. A red flag flew for three hours at the University of Madrid on the 17th. And the same day, 200 black students occupied the administration buildings of Dower University. On May 18 protests flared up in Rome, and more in Madrid where barricades and clashes with the police occurred. On May 19, students in Berkeley were arrested. A student protest in New York, an attack on an ROTC center in Baltimore—the old world seemed to be on the ropes. On May 20, Brooklyn University was occupied by blacks, and occupations took place the next day at the University of West Berlin. On May 22, police broke through barricades at Columbia University. The University of Frankfurt and the University of Santiago were occupied on May 24. Protests in Vancouver and London in front of the French Embassy on May 25. On Monday May 27, university and high school students went on strike in Dakar. Protests by peasants in Belgium on May 28. On May 30, students in Munich

Social Anarchism revisited

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from principles that might in any way be construed as radical." It's not hard to figure out what a "respectable" socialist is.)

Here one can easily lament with Bookchin. The potential to draw people into the struggle for a libertarian lifestyle is not being exploited, for whatever reason. Yet the majority of anarchist organizations in the world (and in the U.S.A.) can be labeled "social anarchists," which by Bookchin's definition are rational libertarian socialists who seek to organize society along cooperative, federalist lines. These organizations, as we know, are often anemic and, with a few exceptions, have made only the most marginal inroads into society. If we are to follow Bookchin's logic, we should draw the conclusion that the lifestyle anarchists are drawing potential supporters of social anarchism away and that this not only weakens the core of anarchist ideas, but weakens the anarchist movement. Many people would agree with Bookchin; I do not. On the one hand, it is easy to adopt labels and it is easy to join radical cliques that do not require any commitment to social struggle or building an alternative lifestyle and cooperative movements. Some might argue that Bookchin's "lifestyle" anarchism is attractive to people who do not want to (read, are too lazy to) settle down to a long and often fruitless task. On the other hand, social anarchism also has its drawing points for people. Partially it appeals to people who believe in the need for cohesive organization. It also does not typically call on people to actively change the social relations in their lives and does not offer such scary prospects as the destruction of technology. And it also does not call on people

Guy Debord, 1968

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protested, as did students in Vienna the next day. On June 1, protests spread to Denmark and Buenos Aires. The next day the massive Yugoslav insurrection began. In Brasil, 16,000 students went on strike on June 6, followed by a large protest march in Geneva for democratization of the university. Even in Turkey, 20,000 students occupied the universities in Ankara and other cities. The chronology just keeps going as occupations, protests, scandals and barricades continued throughout the summer in Tokyo, Osaka, Zurich, Rio, Rome, Montevideo, Bangkok, Dusseldorf, Mexico City, Saigon, Cochabamba, La Paz, South Africa, Indonesia, Chicago, Venice, Montreal, Auckland. "What," people seemed to be asking, "if the entire world were transformed into a Latin Quarter?"

to actually do anything. Usually it is enough to join an organization, distribute literature, and find a few warm bodies to add to the membership list during your lifetime.

Social anarchism should have as much potential to draw people as lifestyle anarchism. If it doesn't, *why* doesn't it? Why can't the social anarchists (of the MB ilk) build their ranks and continue to look at the individualists as petty-bourgeois exotica? Now this is an interesting question. Bookchin tells us why the egoists won't build a social revolution, but what about the social revolutionaries? Maybe he should have written a book entitled *The Death of Social Anarchism*.

I offer the idea that insofar as anarchist responsibility for the decline in anarchism is concerned, it is not a problem of many people surrendering the core of anarchist principles but of people not implementing anarchist principles. Furthermore, I posit that many anarchists are terrified by the prospect of anarchist society. As the evolutionary anarchists put it, the social conditions are not ready for anarchy. (I can only imagine Bookchin's reaction to any movement that would seek to get rid of capitalism or the state by any necessary means in the here and now.) Anarchism as an ideology and subculture, as Bob Black once put it, can be unconsciously counted on "to endure indefinitely since revolution isn't really imaginable in the here-and-now." Should there be any wonder that calls for "immediacy" would have an appeal to people? They want change now and if personal change and local autonomy is all they can get, they'll take it.

In a way, Bookchin is partially right (just like he's partially left). He says that "freedom dialectically interweaves the individual with the collective" and that "[individuals] are immensely defined by the relationships they establish or are obliged to establish with each other." If there are people who expect personal freedom but expect to maintain a wealthy, bourgeois, urban lifestyle, which necessitates that thousands of people be exploited to uphold it, then of course these are petit bourgeois individuals. Other individuals, in the tradition of Stirner, do not expect that the world toil to keep up production, and that services on wages be conditions dictated by the capitalist system; instead they would hope that millions of individual acts of refusal would bring down the system. (How realistic a model that is outside of bourgeois, civic society or in the third world is another question; only in places where there is no fear of immediate, real reprisals or starvation can individual rather than collective refusal be an option. But there are different societies—there may be different ways of overcoming the system.) The fundamental thing that must be remembered is that universally, anarcho-individualists want to bring down the system. Bookchin's bogeyman of the self-indulgent, petit-bourgeois egoist who cannot see beyond the realm of his or her own liberation does exist, but is it fair to lump people like that together into a group with people who just have a different view than Bookchin of how anarchy should be achieved? If lifestyle anarchism is replete with New Age, mystic, anti-rational ideas, what of the large number of egoists or individualists who despise such things? If it is primitivist, what

of the cypherpunk breed of anarchist? The answer is, of course, that they all get lumped together. (This is, after all, a person who can judge your commitment to the social revolution by seeing your haircut.) It is ironic that Bookchin criticizes L. Susan Brown for creating "straw collectivists" (while criticizing most collectivists in her *Politics of Individualism*) while his whole book is based on his own creation of a straw lifestyle anarchism. This is poor criticism; this is the work of an ideologue who is not beyond creating some untruths and arrogantly creating polar forces ("an unbridgeable chasm") between which brainless readers must unconsciously choose sides.

Although I don't agree with many premises of the book, there are points which can serve as gateways of greater discussion.

In Bookchin's critique of L. Susan Brown's *Politics of Individualism*, he writes that "the idea that a collective—and by extrapolation, society—is merely a 'collection of individuals, no more, no less' represents an insight into the nature of human association that is hardly liberal, but, today particularly, potentially reactionary." Just as dirt and water make mud, a group of individuals become something different than their individual components. Yet society or groups must either recognize that individuals must ultimately be responsible for their own actions or it must take responsibility for the action of all its members. It therefore must act as an agent of control. (In anarchist ideology, the idea of human harmony acts as an agent of control. Control can be self-control.) That members of society may regulate human interaction may not be so bad (given individual volition) or

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Form and Content in Elements of Refusal

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acting without regard for their own material interests. Brinton, an apologist for the dominant society with a sneaking admiration for revolution, seems clearly stunned by this and fails to follow the insight to its logical conclusion.

The potential impact of this thesis regarding the insurrectionary subject, particularly in the context of a post-industrial economic situation, is shattering. To enumerate just one development, it provides some empirical substantiation to Camatte's thesis that humanity, in the years since the Second World War, has been utterly proletarianized, altering the insurrectionary project from one of class versus class to species versus society or specifically, social concept. There are many other implications of this thesis, to be worked out in the coming years by theorists who have as yet to find a voice, a method (and a publisher).

Loose Cannons

Who Is Chomsky?

Noam Chomsky is probably the most well-known American anarchist, somewhat curious given the fact that he is a liberal-leftist politically and downright reactionary in his academic specialty of linguistic theory. Chomsky is also, by all accounts, a generous, sincere, tireless activist, which does not, unfortunately, confer his thinking with liberatory value.

Reading through his many books and interviews, one looks in vain for the anarchist or any thorough critique. When asked point-blank, "Are governments inherently bad?" his reply (28 January 1988) is no. He is critical of government policies, not government itself, motivated by his "duty as a citizen." The constant refrain in his work is a plea for democracy: "real democracy," "real participation," "active involvement," and the like.

His goal is for "a significant degree of democratization," not the replacement of political rule, albeit democratic rule, by a condition of no rule called anarchy. Hardly surprising, then, that his personal practice consists of reformist, issues-oriented efforts like symbolic tax resistance and ACLU membership. Instead of a critique of capital, its forms, dynamics, etc., Chomsky calls (1992) for "social control over investment. That's a social revolution." What a ridiculous assertion.

His focus, almost exclusively, has been on U.S. foreign policy, a narrowness that would exert a conservative influence even for a radical thinker. If urging increased involvement in politics goes against the potentially subversive tide toward less and less involvement, Chomsky's emphasis on statecraft in itself gravitates toward acceptance of states. And completely ignoring key areas (such as

nature and women, to mention only two), makes him less relevant still.

In terms of inter-governmental relations, the specifics are likewise disappointing. A principal interest here is the Middle East, and we see anything but an anarchist or anti-authoritarian analysis. He has consistently argued (in books like *The Fateful Triangle*, 1983) for a two-state solution to the Palestinian question. A characteristic formulation: "Israel within its internationally recognized borders would be accorded the rights of any state in the international system, no more, no less." Such positions fit right into the electoral racket and all it legitimizes. Along these lines, he singled out (*Voices of Dissent*, 1992) the centrist

(copies available from me). He gave a rather non-sequitur, pro-left response and has gone right on keeping his public back turned against any anarchist point of view.

Chomsky's newest book of interviews, *Class Warfare*, is promoted in the liberal-left media as "accessible new thinking on the Republican Revolution." It supposedly provides the answers to such questions as "Why, as a supporter of anarchist ideals, he is in favor of strengthening the federal government." The real answer, painfully obvious, is that he is not an anarchist at all.

Long a professor of linguistics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, he achieved fame and fortune for his conceptions of the nature of language. Professor

Chomsky sees language as a fixed, innate part of some "essential human nature" (Barsamian 1992). Language develops along an intrinsically determined path, very much like a physical organ. In this sense, Chomsky says language "simply arose" (1988) and that we should study it as "we study any problem in biology" (1978).

In other words, language, that most fundamental part of culture, has no real relationship with culture and is a matter of instinct-driven formation through biological specialization.

Here, as everywhere else, Chomsky cannot even seem to imagine any problematics about origins of alienation or fundamental probings about what symbolic culture really is, at base. Language

for Chomsky is a strictly natural phenomenon, quite unrelated to the genesis of human culture or social development. A severely backward, non-radical perspective, not unrelated to his unwillingness—this "anarchist" of ours—to put much else into question, outside of a very narrow political focus.

The summer 1991 issue of *Anarchy* magazine included "A Brief Interview with Noam Chomsky on Anarchy, Civilization, & Technology." Not surprisingly, it was a rather strange affair, given the professor's general antipathy to all three topics. The subject of anarchy he ignored altogether, consonant with his avoidance of it throughout the years. Responding to various questions about civilization and technology, he was obviously as uncomfortable as he was com-



Jerry Berndt

Salvadoran politician Ruben Zamora when asked who he most admired.

Chomsky has long complained that the present system and its lap-dog media have done their best, despite his many books in print, to marginalize and suppress his perspective. More than a little ironic, then, that he has done his best to contribute to the much greater marginalization of the anarchist perspective. He has figured in countless ads and testimonials for the likes of *The Nation*, *In These Times*, and *Z Magazine*, but has never even mentioned *Anarchy*, *Fifth Estate*, or other anti-authoritarian publications. Uncritically championing the liberal-left media while totally ignoring our own media can hardly be an accident or an oversight. In fact, I exchanged a couple of letters with him in 1982 over this very point

pletely unprepared to give any informed responses. Dismissive of new lines of thought that critically re-examine the nature of civilization, Chomsky was obviously ignorant of this growing literature and its influence in the anti-authoritarian milieu.

Concerning technology, he was, reluctantly, more expansive, but just as in the dark as with the question of civilization. His responses repeated all the discredited, unexamined pro-tech clichés, now less and less credible among anarchists: technology as a mere tool, a “quite neutral” phenomenon to be seen only in terms of specific, similarly unexamined uses. Chomsky actually declares that cars are fine; it's only corporate executives that are the problem. Likewise with robotics, as if that drops from heaven and has no grounding in domination of nature, division of labor, etc., etc. In closing, he proclaimed that “the only thing that can possibly resolve environmental problems is advanced technology.” Yes: *more* of the soul-destroying, eco-destroying malignancy that has created the current nightmare!

In the fall of 1995 Chomsky donated much of the proceeds from a well-attended speech on U.S. foreign policy to Portland's Freedom and Mutual Aid center, better known as the local anarchist info-shop. As if to honor its generous benefactor appropriately, the info-shop spent the money first of all on a computer system, and several months later financed a booklet promoting the info-shop and the ideas behind it. Among the most prominent quotes adorning the pamphlet is one that begins, “The task for a modern industrial society is to achieve what is now technically realizable.” The attentive reader may not need me to name the author of these words, nor to point out this less than qualitatively radical influence. For those of us who see our task as aiding in the utter abolition of our “modern industrial society,” it is repellent in the extreme to find its realization abjectly celebrated.

In issues of *The Progressive* and *Z Magazine* during 1996 and 1997, Chomsky has actually argued that no one should support a “devolution” of Big Brother authority—a movement of power from the federal government to state and local levels. This bankrupt and disgraceful “anarchist” (!) angle has been

enough to create a furor among even some of the utterly reformist partisans of those tepid mags.

Most of the above mainly belongs to the well-known, dreary, superficial field of waning leftism, but more pernicious is its apparent influence on those supposedly committed to the goal of anarchy.

Black & Red's latest (1997) offering is a reprint of Chomsky's *Objectivity and Liberal Scholarship*, which discusses the shockingly novel and radical thesis that liberals have been known to conceal/distort historical truth. The re-publication of this piece of

memorabilia was assisted (and introduced) by individuals of *Fifth Estate*, which is itself in decline by the measure of its growing leftist component. *FE* was once a vibrant, cutting-edge project. Now its milieu in Detroit can find nothing better than a thirty-year-old, already published relic to give expression to its meager resources.

Chomsky, like Bookchin, represents the failed, inadequate critique of the past, resolutely unwilling or unable to confront the enveloping crisis on all levels. It is past time to go forward and engage the real depths of the disaster facing all of us.

CHRISTIAN ANGST

Jane's dilemma continued as she struggled daily with both dyslexia and agnosticism...

Hmmm...I wonder if there really *is* a Dog.



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Have something to say? Write us!

We would like to encourage you to write us in order to continue this dialogue, whether you are sympathetic with or critical of anarchist theories and practices. All letters will be printed with the author's name & city only, unless it is specifically stated that her/his full address may be used, that only initials should be used, or that s/he wishes to remain completely anonymous.

If necessary, we will edit letters that are redundant, overly long, unreadable, excessively boring or contain death threats. (Ellipses in italicized brackets [...] indicate editorial omissions.) Limit length to *three* double-spaced, typewritten pages. Address your letters to C.A.L., POB 1446, Columbia, MO 65205-1446, USA.

The fringes of total freedom

To Jason & friends/*Anarchy* letters,

I note the irony and ideological ambivalence and confusion as you (and so many others) try to mix total freedom with a practical reality. We are to disarm the state and arm our desires and enjoy the fun and games forever after. All forms and styles of sexual or other relationships of paired individuals and groups are not only tolerated but approved and sanctioned. No legal nor moral restraints on any of the fun and games including the most freaked-out relationships. No dominance games or any structural hierarchy is permitted; total freedom of choice in all things and no taboos.

Aside from the problem of authority or social ordering always emerging in any association I see no serious objection in the letters section to any of the above, not until you move into the fringes of total freedom and no rules where it begins to get nasty, stupid, and inane. Like when you grant any adult the right to seduce other people's minor children and call it a contractual or consenting relationship you provide the State and the righteous brothers and sisters with all the law and indignation they need to move against you.

Granted that some of these man-boy and man-girl and other couplings are not automatically bad, some may have a good side, but the dark side is always there, and always will be, and

widespread hostility to any freedom mode that supports or even condones this.

I am for freedom, for myself and for others, social and political and economic freedom, and believe there are enough like minded people out there to make an effective freedom coalition, if and when we can arrive at a practical working consensus. It can be broad based and open-ended; the whole range from anarchists through those who want at least the basics of a republic with liberty under law. Without need of an agenda that all must agree on or anyone's freedom pledge. A pro-freedom anti-State coalition that our keepers could not ignore, or subvert.

Within those limits we can do without leaders, or have them for every faction, and force an accounting on some of the basic issues. Not by force of arms or any pushy demonstration but simply by being large and too competent and articulate a minority to ignore. And if we do it right we might have enough popular support to make a majority, though that is doubtful.

In the absence of anything such we are powerless and defenseless against our Statist keepers. Where the best you can do is try to live as free as you can until you get busted for it.

When I was still trying to believe in the American way according to the Great Christian-Capitalist anti-Communist Crusade I tried to get some of these people to get real and practical, and even as radical as those Colonials that got us our

limited American freedoms. But they are not to be moved off their righteous square one, and I drifted from there into libertarian and anarchist associations. And found that the best of the anarchists are nearer to the basic values of a free republic than any of the intellectually constipated conservatives, which seems to include most of them. And I have become near-obsessed with this basic potential and opportunity; there are enough of Us to make a coalition and maybe get Them off our backs and have some real freedom. Anytime; or most any tomorrow.

After experiencing the futility of the Conservative Coalition I went with the "Libertarian" development despite its contradictions and ambiguity, like the absurdity of a libertarian political party. And near went up the walls in rage and disgust as Libertarianism immolated itself in exercises in futility. With an enthusiasm that I found incredible in otherwise intelligent people.

Most of these Libertarians came out of Conservative associations and felt the need to distance themselves from their former associations even as they kept the same basic values and rhetoric, now more radicalized. The result was an absurd antithetical dialectic upon which a Libertarian ideology was constructed by their would be scholars, and they are welcome to it. They have their fun and games and get some media attention as they are now a perfectly harmless fringe group/faction.

Anarchists have generally avoided such contradictions as mixing politics and freedom, although it seems to me the mix can hardly be avoided. I mean if we are going to have a free society we need some sort of social ordering to make it work, and that makes some sort of basic politics unavoidable. The Conservatives claim to have that but actually have a rather confused meld of fascism. Not necessarily like Hitler's or anyone else's fascism, but by basic definition the Conservative Coalition is a generic fascism. While Libertarianism is a mix of free-

dom fun and games with a politics that can only be defined by its being derivative of and antithetical to Conservatism. Or, I repeat; our main problem is not our oppressor but our utter lack of a relevant freedom consensus.

Which is why I monitor anarchism, although I do not belong; some real creative juices are flowing there, and as I noted previously, anarchism at its best is closer to the basic republican values I follow than either Conservatism or Libertarianism. But too much that goes on under the cover of anarchism is also self-defeating; particularly exercises in totally value-free individual choice.

That is my conclusion and the letters section of the last several issues does confirm it; not just Statists and the morally righteous but some of your own supporters are turning against you for going with a freedom that includes what some consider child abuse, and I agree. Abuse of children and disregard for the rights of the parents of those children; to protect their children and to define their own family standards. And although I became a non-conformist at an early age I am disturbed by some of the present trends.

In a past issue there was a fourteen year old whining that he could not do a dope trip as his asthma messed it up, then another, shades of "The Stainless Steel Rat"—who after High School does a short stretch of hard time for dope, and sees it as a finishing school; preparing him for society as it really is. He just might be a great success in life, in the dope trade or a corporation or the Mafia, and small difference any more. Then there are all those amusing destiny's tots who claim to have solemnly declared their sexual freedom by the age of seven or so, and all those who are simply obnoxiously alienated.

Now the sub-title of your mag; "A Journal of Desire Armed"—is taken from a fine piece of rhetoric; but as a rule of life or a moral guide I wonder. It seems to me like Dr. Feelgood recycled. An individual can follow that, with some discretion and consideration for

others, and have a good life and not offend unduly against any sensible legal order. But any collective, as commune or extended family or as a society, has to have some protection against those value-free ones who sow ruin in their wake.

Now some quotes from your [letters to the editor in issue] #40; first page 78, A.S.I. from Berkeley, CA:

"I believe in absolute freedom. I agree with you that freedom is not absolute unless it completely rejects the constraints of law and morality. And I understand the real-world implications of this belief. Do you?"

Well yes I do; I understand the real-world implications only too well, and this will never sell—such freedom can always be contained by the power-freaks. Now page 79, S. from Manhattan, KS:

"Any radical theory should be premised on the notion that intergenerational human survival outside society isn't possible. However, a society without authoritarian power structures and private property is possi-

ble! In fact, if there is to be a sustainable future such a society is a necessity."

Now page 62, "Howlin' Mad" Johann in West Hills, CA:

"There were lots of punks who behaved incredibly rudely to the hosts and stood around the keg all night like a pack of surly dogs at feeding time."

So much for unstructured non-hierarchical collectives; you got to have rules man, and even enforcement. Now I am all for a society as free as is compatible with a sustainable future and you people have good dialogue on that but not when you slip into the farther reaches of absolutely anything goes.

Robert E. Sagehorn
Western Review Institute
Box 806
Chino, CA 91708-0806

Relying on our own desires

Dear Anarchy,

This is a response to A.I.'s letter in Anarchy #40.

First, A.I., it is possible that I've mis-interpreted you. At

first, it seemed you were being sarcastic about what you perceived as *Anarchy's* alleged absolute aversion to laws. But since you seem so absolute and literal concerning laws all the while professing to be an anarchist, I no longer think it was sarcasm. But, I could be wrong. If that is indeed the case, I must admit I fail to see your point. However, this letter might still be interesting to some anyway.

A.I.'s letter asks for a refutation. I will try to give one. He says real anarchy is "no rules or restrictions, not even against the things you don't like". I'm not so sure he intends to be so literal-minded, but assuming he does, let me comment. If there was, indeed, not to be *any* rules or restrictions, then obviously, there *would* be rules and restrictions against rules and restrictions. He also says he believes in absolute freedom, while also maintaining that human nature will remain what it is. That being the case, as soon as there is even the slightest conflict of interest (which is inevitable, unless human nature changes)

someone's freedom will cease to be absolute. In other words, any literal interpretation of what some call anarchy is self-contradictory, or meaningless.

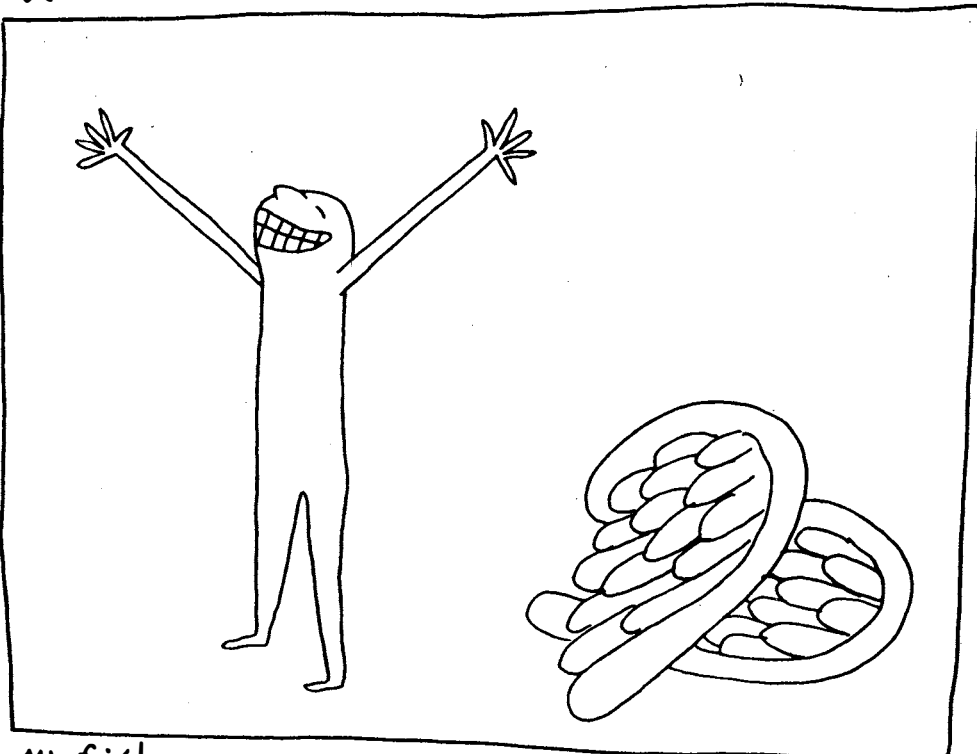
I will not give a definition of anarchy, but will try to convey what I mean by it thru discussion.

First, let's talk about laws. What does one mean when one says he's against (certainly not, *all*) laws? At least how it relates to our detriment. Let me say how I mean it (I certainly invite comments with those who may disagree).

First, if there was a law that, when followed, would lead to no harm at all, but when broken, caused severe suffering, you'd be a fool to object to that law. After all, to object to a law, simply for being a law, is ideological and non-anarchistic. But is it simply the law being objected to, or the implementation of it? Would the implementation of the law lead to the practice of implementing a trillion other laws, most of which could be to our detriment? Also, if there was such a wonderfully useful law, would it really be necessary to formally declare it? However, one of my strongest objections to the idea of formal laws is the practice of obeying a law simply because it is a law. Unless you fear retaliation, the fact that an act is illegal should carry no weight whatsoever in your decision to do the act or not. Yet so many people, upon learning that someone "broke the law," even if they know they themselves are capable of breaking it, feel it is OK for the "authorities" to "punish" the "law breaker." I find that despicable and I'm sure most anarchists (actually, any sensible person) would agree. A ton more could be said about laws but we'll leave it at that.

Are there any standards of behavior in my alleged anarchistic world? I believe the true anarchist believes the standard is however one feels like acting. Why go by anyone else's standard? (Of course, that does not mean one would deny the possibility that his thoughts and actions were inconsistent or damaging. Discussion, rationality,

It was as if a tremendous weight had been lifted off his back.



Mr. Fish

would hopefully exist. But then again, even without all this, things would probably be better than they are now; a few getting their wishes and everyone else acting for those few.) Would this lead to a mass chaotic conflict of interest? I don't necessarily think so and here's why. Not by faith, or hope, but by simply observing the people I come across, that most (not all) people's *true* (not state influenced) desires and aversions are not all that divergent. Most people do not "need" to control large populations to be content. Most people would be turned off to bashing babies heads in. Those people whose needs/desires are in great conflict with the rest will simply be dealt with in true anarchistic (practical) manner.

I don't think any effort is needed to have concern for others; it seems there's enough (even if very little) that occurs naturally. For most of us, we realize that to cooperate with each other is in our best interests, so cooperation would happen just as naturally. I don't claim this world would be utopian but the premise of relying on our own desires as a guide to behavior at least seems to make more sense than anything else. And remember, I'm assuming certain traits occur in the majority of the people. If it was indeed the case that, for the majority, our desires were truly harmful to one another, (for example, we all had a natural desire to saw peoples' heads off) then I guess I would prefer "law and order" for the simple reason that I think I'd suffer less that way. And, of course, since it seems to me those dangerous traits are in the minority, I prefer a society without "law and order" (the way it is in practice, that is) for similar reasons.

I don't think human nature has to mutate into compassionate beings, but rather, stop behaving like the gullible, pathetic creatures they've been turned into by the state. One way to accomplish this is thru discussion, magazines like *Anarchy*, etc. Thru that, people might start to act in a more

ers" believe the junk they tell us? If *all* people would follow their *true* desires, the budding tyrant(s) would most likely be ignored or, if still dangerous, killed off. It is not anarchism that fails us, but rather, the fact that not *everyone* (or at least not most of us) behaves like an anarchist. This shows, by the

more by not raping than the woman would by getting raped, and I had no personal interest in either, and further, somehow knew nobody I cared about would be a victim, why should I stop him? Why should I be more concerned about her (the victim) welfare than his? I admit I can't see how I could

know such a thing but after all, it is possible some people could be like that. That is one reason I don't like laws; they seem to have such absolute moral overtones. However, it is most likely the case that I'd believe the victim would indeed suffer more and that the rapist would end up being a big drag for people I care about, and further, that the rapist is hypocritically inconsistent towards others' suffering. That being the case, it is most likely I'd prevent him from raping. If that, in A.I.'s opinion, means I'm not an anarchist, fine. But as I implied

earlier, being an anarchist (by some definitions) is neither necessary nor sufficient to be welcomed in the world I'm talking about.

Blair Erikson
Warminster, PA.

Yet more on consent

Dear *Anarchy*:

On age of consent.... Too many of the correspondents whose letters have been published in the pages of *Anarchy* have shown a needless and pernicious tendency to concede to the enemies of human liberty something they should not, and that's the presumption that sexual activity, in and of itself, is either absolutely and beyond argument harmful to children or else so risky that inexperienced and unripe little kids can't be permitted to experiment with it.



consistent manner. (Personally, I think it's a hopeless case, but what the hell!)

One might ask, it may have started out like that, but how did things get to where they are today? Ironically, it may very well have been an anarchist (if you define that as being one who follows his own desires) who convinced others *not* to act in an anarchistic manner. (I'm skipping over much of the sequence but it could have been pretty much like that). This happens now. Probably every ruthless tyrant you can think of is an anarchist. He does not act according to anyone's standards but his own. Of course, he does not admit this. Also, he will denounce anarchy and convince people of things that are really detrimental to them. He does all this to accomplish *his* ends. Do you really believe our "lead-

way, that an anarchistic society does not necessarily welcome all anarchists! (Again, depending on one's definition.)

Lastly, let me discuss rape (since it was A.I.'s example). If a person was such that he truly desired to rape, and really could not care less about the suffering of others (and consistent with that, of course, is he would not feel anyone should care about him either) then I really could not blame him for raping. (Which is not to say I'd necessarily stand by and let it happen) Actually, if I really believed he truly needed to do that to have a contented life, I might say go ahead and rape. However, it is probably the case that he does not care all that much about the victim's suffering (or maybe is not that aware?). If I thought the potential rapist would actually suffer

A professional baseball player, suffering from a near-terminal case of lackanookie and desiring to get out into the evening to find himself something warm and penetrable, asked his manager why a curfew was being imposed. "It ain't the sex that's bad for your game," the manager explained. "It's the runnin' around all night lookin' for it that does you in."

Sexual activity of almost any kind (as long as it's entered into voluntarily and consent is not secured by fraud or trickery) is not in and of itself harmful. It's the "additives"—the baggage to which sexuality has become arbitrarily and idiotically engrafted in our culture—that make the practice hazardous to those who desire to engage in anything other than coupling in the officially Church-and-State sanctioned orthogenital manner within the bonds of Holy Matrimony.

But what about non-cultural and biologically determined factors? Most particularly, consider venereally transmitted diseases.

Let's approach this from the viewpoint of an epidemiologist. The first question to ask is this: are all sexual transactions likely to be complicated by the transmission of disease? Indeed, is the worst of all the venereally transmitted infectious disorders—Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome—so widespread in the population as to be a reason to abstain from sexual intercourse altogether?

Not even a substantial minority of sexual activities carry with them the risk of transmitting even the most unremediable diseases. Coition of all kinds goes on in the world at such rates and with such force and vigor that the careful worldwide co-ordination of such activity could no doubt create harmonic vibrations in the lithosphere capable of triggering earthquakes in the Hindu Cush. There's a lot of screwing going on out there.

This notwithstanding, only the tiniest fraction of those acts are cursed by the carriage of virus or bacterium or parasite from one body to another. It is even possible, by dint of careful at-

tention to personal and public hygiene, to maintain whole communities in which venereal diseases need not be statistically significant risk factors. We've done it for yellow fever and malaria and cholera and syphilis. There's no reason to believe that it can't be done for the other communicable disorders,

Coition of all kinds goes on in the world at such rates and with such force and vigor that the careful worldwide co-ordination of such activity could no doubt create harmonic vibrations in the lithosphere capable of triggering earthquakes in the Hindu Cush. There's a lot of screwing going on out there.

including AIDS.

With the understanding that the members of the average community in the U.S. are about as much exposed to potentially fatal sexually transmitted diseases as they are to Lhasa fever and yellowjack—i.e., not much—what precisely makes sex even the least little bit more hazardous than simply beating off? And what justifies the proscription of childhood participation in sexual activities?

As for risk...Consider the risks undertaken by a ten year old boy who goes off to play a game of Little League baseball. First, he puts his pert little ass into the seat of his bicycle, balancing his glove and bat on the handlebars. He wobbles his way through the streets, risking his neck in dozens of close encounters with station wagons and minivans driven by harassed housewives.

Each year, a lot more kids are killed and injured in traffic accidents than lose their lives to adult lovers. Remember that insanely murderous people like Jeffrey Dahmer and John Wayne Gacy are statistical rarities when compared to the number of nice, honest, law-abiding heterosexual men and women

who suddenly and inexplicably go berserk and start scattering bits of their family members' anatomies around the rec room.

The kid arrives at the baseball field. He engages in warm-ups, wrassling with another kid who has a bit of a cough—and in whose sputum a microscopic examination would reveal thou-

example with far more regard for his feelings than his coach just did.

The kid takes the field, nearly manages a double-play (the first baseman got pulled off the bag by the shortstop's throw), and soon he comes up to bat again. The opposing team has put in a new pitcher, a burly eleven year-old with a helluva fast ball but not much control. The kid takes a ball, high and outside, then swings at one low and inside.

The kid's coach badgers him loudly, and the kid sweats, digging in. The pitcher gets the signal for a fast ball, right down the middle, but he fucks up, and a baseball travelling at 76 miles per hour strikes our right-handed young second baseman on the chest, just a little bit to the left of the sternal border and about two fingerbreadths below the nipple.

The team to which the kid belongs didn't bother to buy batter's chest protectors. Most Little League teams don't. The ball delivers maybe 50 or 60 watts of energy directly to the precordial chest wall, stunning the Kid's heart for just that critical instant needed to produce ventricular fibrillation.

The kid goes down on his knees, more surprised than hurt, thinking that the wind'd been knocked out of him. Six or ten seconds later, his blood pressure dropping through the floor, he slumps over, unconscious.

None of the people at the game are Paramedics or EMT's. Nobody there has any training in ACLS. The Australopithecine coach had a Basic Life Support course about eight years ago, but he remembers nothing. The college junior who'd been umpiring the game shouts at people to get back and "give the kid some air," and maybe after four or five minutes of dithering, somebody remembers what they'd seen on *Rescue 911*, and starts to give the kid some kind of half-assed CPR.

Too late. Eight minutes after that fast ball hit the kid's chest, the kid's team is in the market for a new second baseman. He's dead.

Every year, several kids just like this one die in just precisely

Letters

this way, while playing in sanctioned Little League baseball games here in the good old U.S. of A. Guess how many boys that age die in bed as the direct result of the complications of making love? The answer is "none."

Casimir DuKahsz once said that the age of consent should properly be set at the age at which a boy can say "Yes." If a kid knows that it can feel good, and that he can walk away from it the moment he's no longer enjoying what he's involved in, he should no more be frightened away from it by the "Repel, Yell, and Tell" assholes in the schools than he should be forbidden to play baseball.

When a boy climbs into bed with someone—no matter what that someone's age or gender might be—for the purpose of converting some skin-on-skin exercise into orgasmic endorphins, he's not doing something that's either terribly complex, indelibly binding, or dangerous.

At best, it's comforting and pleasurable. At worst, it's something he can chalk up in the category of "learning experiences." No matter what else it may be, however, above all it's no big fucking deal.

The idea that consenting to a casual roll in the hay is so much on a par with enlisting oneself in the military or entering into a commodity futures trading agreement that only a mature, stable adult may be permitted to do so is, on the face of it, just a little bit ludicrous, don'tcha think?

To set any arbitrary age as the point at which one can

be considered capable of giving consent to sexual activity is kind of witless. Why sixteen? Why twelve? Why even seven or eight? Do we set arbitrary ages at which people are permitted to engage in intellectual intercourse? Of course not.

When you're old enough to understand concepts and can use language to express that understanding, you're old enough to get out there and mingle with people. I've participated in mutually satisfactory discussions about bugs, beetles and butterflies with a little girl who hadn't yet celebrated her fifth birthday. We had to use language that she understood, and we were somewhat limited in terms of comprehension, but much information was transmitted, and we each got pleasure—entirely non-libidinous, I assure you—out of the transaction.

So what is it about sex that makes the broad spectrum of activities subsumed under the rubric of "sexual intercourse"

somehow intrinsically different from hugging, affectionate kissing, friendly communication or mutual comforting in general? Why is an age of sexual consent necessary at all?

Sincerely,
J.L.

Tad Replies Chill

Yeah, personally, I'm bored with the whole discussion as well. Jason and I have discussed it at length, and while we're glad that the subject was broached (and we would've considered it an act of cowardice to retreat from a discussion of the subject when it first presented itself), it's obvious that those on opposite sides of the fence regarding this issue are just going to have to agree to disagree. You're right; nothing new is being added to the debate—it has in fact degenerated. The running debate has now gone on for years in this letters column, and while this is by no means a request that people stop making use of this public forum to discuss this

issue—it is a polite suggestion that everyone just take a deep breath and chill for an issue or two. Nobody's convincing anybody. Suggestions, anyone?

Sacred Drift

To the editor:

I'm writing to commend Feral Faun for his article on Hakim Bey's *Sacred Drift*. While I find many of Bey's ideas interesting, even though many of them are not new, I find his self-promotion to be a problem. In the *Permanent Autonomous Zone*, he tells us to avoid the temptation to become objects of the consensus media. Not only does it do us no good, but it will turn us into targets. Then I'm handed the *Village Voice* open to a full-page photo and interview with Wilson/Bey promoting *Sacred Drift*. Many people use multiple names to keep from becoming consumable products, to keep from becoming mediated objects; Bey uses them to become a cult figure and to sell



more of his own products. On the back of *Sacred Drift* by Peter Lamborn Wilson, we find that Hakim Bey recommends the book. In the *Village Voice* article Wilson plugs Hakim Bey's books. It's one thing to use multiple names to avoid being mediated, and there are many who do that (and I would not name them), but when you use these names to sell yourself as a product, "New York Anarchist-Sufi-Guru" or whatever, it's not time to play along. We don't need anarchist stars or self-appointed cult figures. Following along in the tradition of Terrence McKenna, there are already rave tapes with Hakim Bey spoken word put to techno being distributed by the TAZ rave and SPAZ (semi-permanent) rave. McKenna babbles on about the coming of 2012 and Bey about how a mediated life is no life at all. But once your name becomes elevated to this status, nobody hears what you say, you are just another product being churned through the fashion wheel. You have been "recuperated," Mr. Bey, and it's time to commit suicide, it's time for Hakim Bey to no longer exist. For this comfortable career you have built helps create no life for you or me; it only serves to further this mechanical society. It seems you only half read what the Situationists had to say, or that you just couldn't manage the wild life and opted for an easy path. If you don't disappear soon, you'll become another goo-goo-eyed Timothy Leary, sitting at a rave drooling.

S'Ural Masha

Impotent in the field of mass media

Dear comrades of the Left—members of the Communist Party U.S.A., members of the Socialist Workers Party, members of the Spartacist League, members of the Revolutionary Communist Party, members of the Workers of the World, members of the Industrial Workers of the World, members of the various Anarchist federations, and to all progressively minded people I address this appeal.

The powers that be delight in delineating our differences. They rejoice in the fragmentation of the left. We are relegated to the publication of esoteric periodicals read by a sliver of a fraction of the populace. Whilst they utilize the highest technologies to manipulate the masses in their seething pots of propaganda. Oh, there are attempts to go high-tech such as the C.P.U.S.A.'s Information Super Highway, but how many of the true proletariat own a personal computer? This is the age of video without a doubt, and we are voiceless in this medium. What I am proposing is that an uplink facility be constructed at the transmitter site of Radio For Peace International and that transponder time be leased to get our diverse messages to not only the several million satellite dishes in this hemisphere, but to a great many public access cable channels throughout the country. We all do have one coherent message, that being a more harmonious relationship between men. Though our choice of means to this end are greatly variegated we all desire that common end. Let us come together in this one instance in a united strength so as to beat back the forces of reaction. I am in total agreement with Mr. Bob Black in his *Friendly Fire* that a many-headed, many-organelled left cannot be isolated and thus destroyed. However, we are impotent in the field of mass media and must co-operate to facilitate this most important endeavor. Comrades of the Left unite. We have nothing to win, but the proletariat.

"In the cause of humanity and Light,"

Erwin E. Miller
POB 3364

Sioux City, Iowa 51102

"Libertarian" capitalists

Dear *Anarchy*,

I read your article on libertarianism—bogus anarchy. Once I got past the history lesson on anarchy which the writer correctly stated had nothing to do with writing about libertarianism. Yes, libertarianism supports capitalism along with the

barter system. Liberalism supports socialist capitalism. Anarchists disavow capitalism and I guess all the products that are produced that they like to use, i.e., cars, lightbulbs, refrigerators, etc. will just magically appear since anarchists are against work. Capital has nothing to do with coercive force as you claim. It has to do with people which come in all economic packages. Anarchists of today seem to be pretty much punks while claiming to not let society dictate their lifestyle, fashion, etc. They all are alike—the same Doc boots, leather coats, all of which don't come cheap. In town after town all punk shows are no longer because of "punk" violence and the mentality to thrash everything.

Libertarianism is freedom to choose how to live. If you don't want to be exploited by business don't work for that business or use their products or start your own. Take responsibility for your own life. Libertarians believe in as little government as possible. How can you not have some police force? Are you just going to let the Ted Bundys and Jeffrey Dahmers roam the country murdering people? Granted the fascist system we have now needs to be changed.

You have an article on individualism which is what libertarianism is all about. If you want to work long hard hours to acquire wealth so be it. I don't—I'd rather be a poor artist. That's my choice.

When they had the anarchist gathering in San Francisco, they had a day of rage. Running through the streets of Berkeley thrashing and looting mom and pop stores and tearing up the community produce garden. You have an article on someone who thinks it's great to steal from people's homes. Of course he gets to decide which ones he feels exploit people as if he really knows. Isn't it interesting he wants the same products that other people worked hard for?

We will never live in a perfect utopian world. While you anarchists drive on roads, play instruments, cook on stoves, all of which workers built that you say you want no part of. Your

funny movement of do-nothing lazy people will never change the world. Libertarianism is the third largest party and the only hope of positive change and freedom in this country.

Todd Gilbert
San Diego, CA

Tad responds: Self-serving presuppositions

Your arguments (aside from your silly generalizations) against anti-capitalists are filled with self-serving presuppositions; your questions are leading. You expect to pass them off as well-reasoned regardless—I find this to be very common amongst espousers of "objectivist" philosophy. An anti-capitalist society wouldn't successfully operate using capitalist methods of organization and distribution—no shit. That's our point, and many "Libertarians" smugly trumpet this fact as if it is some secret fatal flaw they've newly discovered in anti-authoritarian reasoning. This triumphant observation is built on the staggeringly unimaginative and intentionally simplified presumption that anti-authoritarians would want to live in a society *just like this one*, merely omitting coercion and force. That wouldn't work, obviously, as the distribution of resources and the social structures we're forced to endure at present can only survive via coercion. Besides, there's a good chance we wouldn't want cars or refrigerators—at least not two cars for every human and one refrigerator for every three. Presenting the supposed unavailability of such amenities (which you claim would occur because of anarchists' alleged unwillingness to work—at least "work" as structured to support capitalist economic interests) as evidence of the nonviability of anarchist social organization is instead evidence to the contrary. Such consumption typifies the waste and built-in obsolescence of self-replicating capitalist production.

You claim (with a straight face, no less) that "capitalism has nothing to do with coercive force", but then admit the necessity of police forces to preserve it. Capitalism's imaginary paper "wealth" (which you speak of as if it existed anywhere *but* on paper) is secured via

the imposition of the capitalist system of exchange/property "ownership" backed up by "coercive force"—*violence*—if the ruse is not passively accepted. This is an imposed social relationship that, unfortunately, cannot be avoided by "not working for [that particular] business" or "start[ing] your own". Such a suggestion (besides being, frankly, stupid) reveals a complete lack of understanding of what it is anti-authoritarians want—which is the *complete abolition* of this relationship—not a new boss. Capitalism is a system whose balance is so delicate, so fragile, that it must rely on overwhelming force and massive spectacular distraction to avoid collapse. Its fragility stems from its reliance on passive assent—it must keep the majority of the population under the heel of artificial scarcity and the threat of starvation or homelessness to keep them toiling to produce things they often can't buy and often don't need...except to survive in a capitalist society.

You mention illegalist burglar Marius Jacob's statement to the court (*Anarchy* #41) and state smirkingly that it is "interesting he wants the same products others worked hard for". What he was after was cash—the ethereal exchange cipher of capitalism—to enable him to "buy" the freedom that every human is due and the rich ensure that only they can afford. "Of course he gets to decide which ones he feels exploit people". Sure. It isn't too hard to tell the difference between Central Park West and the Lower East Side. The people who live on the Lower East Side clean the toilets (\$5.25 an hour) of the idle rich (\$1.5 million a year in rent incomes and interest) of Central Park West. Who performs the more useful function? You've also seemingly been fooled into believing that the poor are poor because they're lazy (a remarkably dumb assertion that has once again found favor widely in some of the more intellectually impoverished but "wealth" saturated areas of current society) and that capitalists "work hard". They may "work hard" shuffling papers and downing martinis at the country club, but the only people who "work hard" are wage-slaves, and they "work hard" for subsistence wages under threat of starvation—without any bullshit Horatio Alger-

style chance for advancement. Whenever anyone goes on about the virtues of "hard work", it's usually a sure sign they've never done any (this maxim equally applies to "anarcho"-syndicalists and other workerists as well).

Since we're the ones who *build* the roads and instruments and stoves, *not* the capitalists, we'll do just fine without their parasitic guidance—as has been evidenced by numerous attempts at living without capitalist coercion (that are squashed as soon as capitalists can hire someone to squash them). We'll even have to work *less* because we'll free up everyone currently hired as police, prison guards, insurance agents, bankers, soldiers, and so on. We'll also have the unemployed—the over ten percent of the population currently designed out of work to scare the shit out of the rest of us—back in the "labor" pool to join us in working for post-capitalist zero-work.

You repeat one of the most tired, oft-chanted apologist's mantras—one of myriad others used in half-assed attempts to demonstrate the scientific inevitability of capitalism's misuse, abuse, and excess—that there's no such thing as "utopia." Probably not—but living as free individuals *together*, without authoritarian leeches on our backs applying carrot and stick and selling us what is rightfully ours would be a good place to start.

Your confusion of "freedom" with the "right," propped up by force, to screw others, is typical of your tendency. That you look to electoral politics to preserve that "right" is no surprise either, and further reveals you for the unabashed statist you are. "Libertarians" like you basically have no problem with the status quo other than the fact that you're not in charge. Accordingly, your claim to being defenders of "liberty" fools no one except yourselves.

Silesian anarchist collective

I'm Tel from Silesian Anarchist Collective (Poland). We're anarchopunxgreenvegeantinazi activists. We would like to get in contact with anarchists from fuckin' U.S.A. I read, you're the

biggest anarchozine in America. So we'll be happy if you send us one. We can write you something about the situation in our region, direct actions, etc. (if you're interested, of course!) I'm looking forward to your response!

Kisses,
Tomasz Tellik
Ul. Pszcynska 12c/24
44-100 Gliwice
Poland

Hot and sticky

Hi!

Travelling in hot and sticky Tuxpan, Mexico (near Veracruz) and so far from home in the midwest, our lonely hearts glowed with exuberant warmth as we joyously read Tad Kepley's, Bob Black's and Bob McGlynn's syrupy yet virulent attacks on each other in *Anarchy*. We've polled the Mexican populace and as a TAZ-style collective, have some serious concern regarding these steamy figures:

1. It is our understanding that B. Black saves his fingernail clippings for later consumption next to his gossip-soaked computer.

2. T. Kepley has never used illegal drugs. Not even pot.

3. Banco de Mexico asserted that Molly Gill, in spite of her dislike of dark-skinned folks, is very amiable as evidenced by her large cute stuffed animal collection (Pooh Bear loves *all* people).

4. Mexican landowners know that Bob M. spends hours viciously chucking darts at his Karl Marx dartboard in his basement.

Quetzalcoatl, ancient god of wind hopes these parties respond.

Marcos Quercos
and Butthole
Tuxpan, Mexico

Meaningless exercise

Anarchy,

It certainly seems safe to say that it is a meaningless exercise to continue to attempt to debate Feral Faun and Jason and their friends at NAMBLA and other such organizations on the issues of sexual authoritarian-

ism, porn, and adult/child sex. They continue to utter the same platitudes and to muster the same ill-argued claims they've been producing throughout the discussion in these pages, and there seems no compelling reason in the most recent round of responses to believe they might for an instant attempt to actually make sense of arguments made by myself and e.g., W.B. of Edgewood, IA, outside of their worldview of "true anti-authoritarians" (Feral, Jason, et al.) vs. "evil enemy agents with a police state agenda masquerading cynically as people interested in a society in which more than just white boys will have at least some possibilities for choices which don't involve being dominated as per usual" (myself, W.B., everyone else who has voiced a dissatisfaction with *Anarchy's* incredibly simplistic approach to the issues listed above). I will only remark here that it is by now quite apparent to me that Faun, Jason, et al. are on these issues at least not in the least "radical" nor even apparently aware of the philosophical roots of their positions, nor do they offer any semblance of a considered argument as to how a society might conceivably go about working toward the "free and consenting" sexual relations among individuals from various and very differently powered subject positions they so crow about, instead preferring to stick by the rugged individualist, laissez-faire ideology which seems to characterize the magazine generally and to denounce any other positions as authoritarian by definition (*i.e.*, if you don't agree with me, you are an authoritarian). W.B. astutely points out that the version of subjectivity and liberation they all seem to be operating under derives from a political philosophical tradition which is nothing more radical or interesting than 19th-century liberalism—Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill in fact would be quite in agreement with many of the foundational assumptions about power, freedoms and abilities to make choices based upon some intrinsic characteristics (human nature perhaps?) which are

easily disentangled from the complications of the social. Indeed, Faun, in a laughingly sophomoric passage (letters page of *Anarchy* #40), imagines "race, gender and age" simply "disappearing" as categories impacting human relationships (a vanishing act usually only imaginable, one scarcely needs to mention, for an inhabitant of all the "invisible" and unmarked positions in these hierarchies); freedom is arrived at simply by "leaving things alone" and letting some unnamed and miraculous force for equality and good (again human nature) work its magic, undoing in a stroke of the historical clock the structures of domination and hierarchy which have put us together, leveling with not a whisper of effort needed on our part all the inequalities into which we are born and which fundamentally shape us, making a brand-new world spontaneously out of the historical building blocks of hierarchy and power which somehow will "not" simply result in those with power continuing to exercise it and those without it continuing to have it exercised upon them. It is a convenient, romantic, and very privileged understanding of social change and utopia, and it of course seems utterly ridiculous to anyone who does not share such an ahistorical, uncritical, and uncomplicated view of society and power. But then it doesn't seem Faun, Jason, et al. even intend to be speaking to those who don't already agree with them—they pontificate and accuse, they do not argue.

On the subject of history, in my time as a sometime reader of *Anarchy*, Faun and Jason have absolutely no history of being able to put together arguments for their positions, preferring

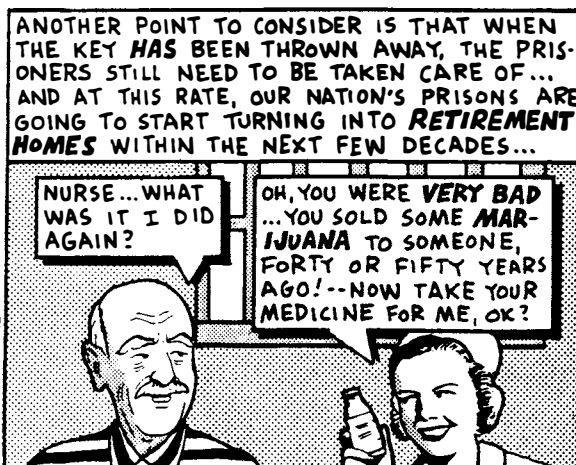
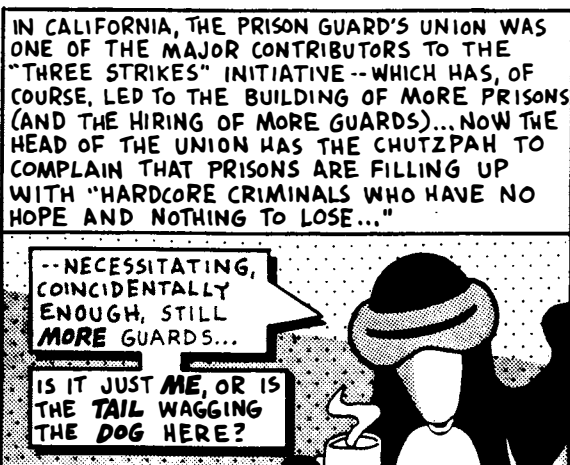
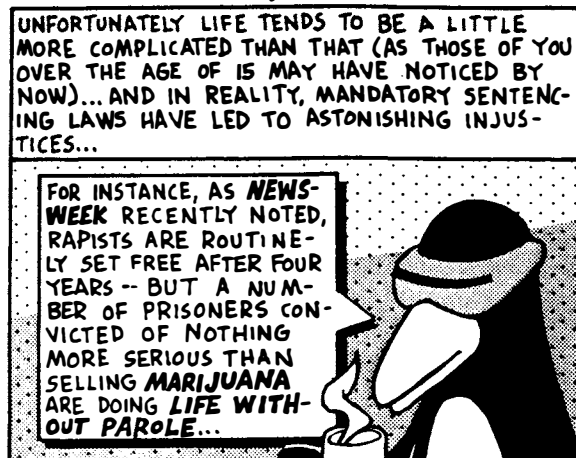
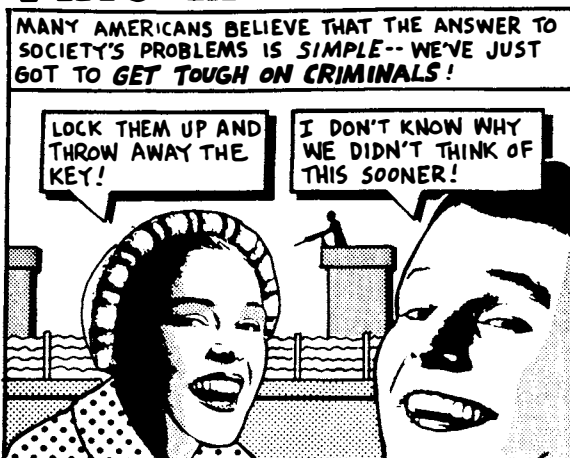
instead to slander opponents as "closet Nazis" or generally ranting about the self-evidence of their own views. Jason resorts in response to W.B. in #40 to making a populist call to "the undoubted majority of readers who can't figure out what W.B. is talking about"—this is insulting to W.B. and to "the...majority of readers" who would have to be stupid indeed not to be able to follow W.B.'s main line of argument. I do not even accuse Jason of such stupidity, blundering as he often is in the pages of this magazine—he seems merely dull and uninteresting, content to call upon rhetorical hot air like classifying W.B. as a "feminist cop" instead of actually trying to figure out the implications of W.B.'s critique of his ideology (and it is indeed, and despite his and *Anarchy's* claims to the contrary, an ideology—as I've said, one over which Mill and Smith

would shake his hand). Faun's "reply" to my last letter scarcely merits any consideration, so full is it with deliberate and hysterical distortion of my words (one of the more glaring examples is Faun's claim that I "read" before endeavoring to "critique," as it is only with the most daring leaps of absurdity that one could find this in or implicated by what I wrote). As always, these "saviors" of "true anti-authoritarianism" articulate precisely *nothing* in the way of useful ideas to stimulate discussion and debate, indeed they seem to have no ideas to contribute here beyond trite calls for a "freedom" which bodes no significant change in social relations for those who don't already exercise such "freedoms." They deftly avoid all attempts to draw such a discussion away from the sweeping generalities they seem to prefer to hard cases—to repeat few questions

asked previously, *where are all the children* who according to those at NAMBLA are so eager to engage in these "free" sexual liaisons with adults? Why is it that so many children speak of sexual contact from adults as intrusive, offensive, hurtful, rather than in the gentle terms of equality and freedom preferred by Faun, Jason, the NAMBLA contingent? Are they simply being brainwashed by the "moral fascists" like myself into thinking this was their testimony when it echoes *your* version of these relations? How do you go about differentiating what you might call brainwashing from "moral fascists" and what I might call "the terror of retribution from Uncle Bob who makes 5-year-olds suck his dick" or "the fear of being killed by Dad, the violent rapist of his daughter" or "the satisfaction of making my grown-up friend happy even if it means I hurt

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



Letters

and feel dominated"? Or do you just *know* these things with the same serene dogmatism by which you apparently know that the radical disruption of social structures, with absolutely zero effort to consider the historical patterns which will invariably be left over after the disruption and actively work on complicated problems instead of simply relying on some ridiculous asocial and ahistorical version of free agency, will result in peaceful utopia rather than variations on Rwanda?

One in fact tires of addressing the distortions of Faun, Jason, et al. and wonders instead again why any critique of the *Anarchy* laissez-faire approach to sexuality is greeted with such immense hostility and irrationality by Faun and his friends. Perhaps the need on

the part of Jason et al. to insult and vilify those who don't buy into their naive laissez-faire vision of sexuality, the disappearance of power and utopic social change is of a relation to the absolutely hilarious remarks he made to another letter in #40 in which he compared FBI Cointelpro against radical groups in the '60s and '70s to "operatives...[who] send in all sorts of letters [to *Anarchy*] attacking different people under false names or under actually existing anarchist's names"; it seems for Jason the enemies are everywhere, all working at peak capacity to discredit and stop the mighty revolutionaries at *Anarchy* magazine from carrying out their oh-so-radical plans. It seems in character that little boys with such vastly distorted egos as to think writing for

Anarchy makes them great revolutionary threats to The State would also be very distressed at this feminazi incursion into *their* ability to fuck anything which moves anytime they feel like it.

I end then with a distaste at the seeming refusal on the part of the "radicals" at *Anarchy* to move on this issue beyond the level of mundane rhetoric and posturing into substantive discussion and at the hypocrisy involved in claiming, as *Anarchy* does, to "refuse all ideology" all the while willingly taking up positions which in their simplicity and dogmatism *necessarily* implicate Faun and the rest of the bunch in contributing to the preservation of the privilege of little white boys with permanently erect dicks.

Thanks though to W.B. and others for writing on this

theme—I've enjoyed your words and your ability to absorb the third-grade histrionics of Faun, Jason, et al.

X.M.

San Diego, CA

Jason responds: Another repressive ideology

Although it is by now extremely obvious that X.M. has nothing new of any value to add to discussions in these pages, I will once again (as briefly as possible) address her/his verbose accusations for the benefit of those who haven't seen the earlier versions of these slimy attacks.

The gist of X.M.'s attempted "arguments" always comes down to crude expressions of her/his disapproval of the fact that *Anarchy* associates just won't abandon



their anarchist perspectives in order to lovingly embrace the ill-conceived post-modernist/authoritarian-feminist ideological constructions which so enamor X.M. I wonder why?

This magazine is a forum primarily for those who wish to discuss the implications and problems of living more freely and, especially, of creating a non-hierarchical, non-capitalist, non-oppressive society. Those like X.M. who demand the suppression of relatively free, consenting relationships (whether sexual or not) by law or force have never figured out that there can be other, non-authoritarian ways to help people of any age or gender defend themselves from rape, oppression and harassment.

From any genuinely libertarian perspective, it simply makes no sense to dogmatically and uniformly suppress whole categories of potentially—but not necessarily—dangerous relationships. Just because people who enter into relationships are different ages, possess different powers & statuses, or transgress the dominant cultural rules & roles does not mean that they are less than human. The choices of people who engage in such consenting relationships (whether or not they meet the standards of politically-correct sexuality mandated by X.M.) do not make them incapable of negotiating problems of uneven power and social disapproval, although they are also never guaranteed success.

If X.M. really wants to be considered as a person interested in a substantively more free society, I'm sure readers will agree that all s/he needs to do is start acting like it! If personal attacks made convincing arguments, then X.M. and her/his cohorts would win any discussion hands-down, considering their unwillingness to shrink from their self-appointed duty to fill every letter with obvious propaganda techniques, misinterpretations, scapegoating and smears.

As X.M. and W.B. never cease to point out, there are certain obvious philosophical similarities between the anarchist and the liberal traditions...like, for instance, the fact that freedom and autonomy turn out to be important categories for each tradition (despite specific differences in the content of these concepts depending upon whether

they are taken in their more or less liberal or anarchic senses). Other critics of anarchy often take a similar tack and try to discredit anarchists (in particular circles) by pointing out how they share certain categories with the socialist/Marxist tradition. Anarchists generally respond that it can be awfully hard to conceive of a relatively liberated society without employing categories like freedom and autonomy, just as it is rather hard to conceive of a relatively egalitarian and communal society without critiques of property, exploitation and commodity-production. Despite X.M.'s insinuations, a high valuation of freedom doesn't make one a liberal any more than a hatred of the private or state ownership of the social means of production makes one a Marxist. For X.M. the renunciation of categories like freedom and autonomy is apparently no problem. I suspect that this is because X.M.'s goals have little or nothing to do with anarchist concerns for a creating a free, communitarian society which allows as great as possible expression for unique individuals regardless of age, gender, race, or desires.

And, finally, X.M.'s attempt to make light of the fact that non-anarchists have been sending disruptive letters for print in this column (which surely must be obvious to anyone at this point who has read recent issues!) is basically just one more attempt to confuse and cover up her/his own part in this phenomenon. Anonymous death threats, intentionally provocative attacks (with hidden agendas), and pro-fascist & pro-Nazi hate mail have all been sent for intended publication in this letters column. I suggest readers remember this fact when evaluating the sincerity and motivation of every letter in this column.

New Marxist reader

Dear Whoever:

Greetings from a new Marxist reader of your press. Although it would be beyond the scope of this correspondence to delve into the classic Marxism vs. Anarchism debate here, I must say that after reviewing your press I have concluded that the two are by no means mutually exclusive.

I find myself in complete

agreement with many of the positions expressed in *Anarchy*, in particular the thorough cultural critique of this rancid globally hegemonic capitalist machine. Nevertheless, I take strong issue with the seemingly constant yet inconsistent "red-baiting" that goes on in the pages of your press. Get it straight!!! Stalinists, Trotskyists, and Maoists are not Marxists, but stale emanations of capitalism's extreme left wing. No matter how hard they attempt to dress their idiocies in Marxist terminology, they remain mere ideologues that eliminate what is essential in Marxism—the method itself (Dialectical Materialism)—and turn it into a vile religion of the state and authority. Even a cursory glance at history shows that Anarchism itself, once turned into a stale ideology, is not immune to manipulation by the state. It is to Marxism's credit as a method of human liberation that the bourgeoisie has found it so necessary to so thoroughly falsify and slander it. Even to the extent of manipulating Anarchists and pulling you—although I'm sure not intentionally; as you yourselves so lucidly point out, capitalism's ideological and cultural mechanisms are capable of much subtlety—into its cacophony of denunciation and falsification of Marxism.

Are the contributors to *Anarchy* aware of the historical legacy of Marxist opposition to the lie that Stalinism, whatever its variety, equals Communism? An opposition which, although not flawless, was courageous enough to stand firmly behind the principle of proletarian internationalism during some of the darkest moments in the twentieth century: rejecting all imperialist camps, classifying the USSR as state-capitalist, and eventually developing a critique of hierarchical forms of organization.

By tacitly giving any credence to the insanity that Stalinism equals Communism you are, whether you know it or not, but serving the ideological interests of our oppressors and helping to cripple the forces working toward a revolutionary destruction of capitalist barbarity. I am anxiously awaiting your reply in

fraternity—if you'll have me.

Sincerely,

M.G.

Rockville, MD

Alex Trotter replies:

You're on

OK, brother, you're on.

Anarchy has never, to my knowledge, taken the position that "Stalinism equals Communism" or even that Stalinism (or Trotskyism or Maoism) equals Marxism. That would indeed be an oversimplification, although there is in fact a significant enough connection, in my opinion. Surely you have to acknowledge that Lenin and Trotsky, along with the other Bolsheviks and Mensheviks, were Marxists. Since you are not a longtime reader of our magazine, however, you may not understand why we take issue with Marxism itself, leaving aside the question of how much it has in common with Leninism and the even more debased ideologies it has spawned in the twentieth century.

It's not even clear to me what "Marxism" actually is, considering that Uncle Karl wouldn't even call himself a Marxist. I associate Marxism primarily with the parliamentary reformist politics of the German Social Democrats and the Second International. But that is not entirely where you're coming from. You are apparently a supporter of "left" or council communism. Some of what you have to say sounds like it came straight out of the program of the International Communist Current or some similar group.

It's good that you are critical, even contemptuous, of the most authoritarian strains of Marxist ideology. And you are right to criticize the shortcomings of ideological Anarchism as well. Now it might behoove you to consider whether Luxemburg as well as Lenin might have been mistaken, and whether Marx himself might not have been wrong about a lot of things. I happen to think there is much of value in Marx, particularly the early and the very late writings, that we can use today to arm our critical intelligence. However, there is also the authoritarian side of Marx which you have not examined sufficiently. The themes that the "mature" Marx devoted himself to reveal this authoritarianism: uncritical enthusiasm for scientific

progress, and acceptance of the necessity of a "proletarian" state, the "historically progressive" nature of capitalist industrial development, and even historically progressive imperialism and war. The worst aspects of Marx are precisely those which his epigones in Germany and Russia developed with such baneful results. The positivistic doctrine of "dialectical materialism" was hatched by Second and Third International Marxists; Marx never used it. His method is more properly termed *historical materialism*. You decry the use of Marxist ideology by despotic governments and sects. Does it occur to you that that may be no accident? What is it about Marxist categories that proved so appealing to the bureaucratic interlopers of "capitalism's extreme left wing"? There is no reason why you should style yourself the follower of a particular human being. The point is to be yourself, not a militant soldier of dogma.

A full treatment of the strengths and weaknesses of Marx's thinking is beyond the scope of this brief response to your letter. You might, however, want to look into the work of the Situationist International, particularly Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* and Raoul Vaneigem's *Revolution of Everyday Life* (which *Anarchy* has been reprinting in serial installments). The sits were themselves Marxists, but of a far more sophisticated variety than the economic reductionists who usually wear that label. Perhaps more germane still are the essays of Jacques Camatte, whose background was nearly the same kind of ultraleft communism that currently holds your fancy. Then there are the post-situationist writers in North America, such as Fredy Perlman, John Zerzan, and Bob Black, whose work has frequently appeared in *Anarchy*.

I don't think that criticism and rejection of Marxism plays into the hands of "the bourgeoisie" at all; in fact, quite the opposite, since the objective historical role of Marxism has been to strengthen, not weaken or destroy, the civilization of capital. Rather than the questionable concepts of class struggle, proletarian dictatorship or representation in parliament, and the supposed necessity for a revolutionary party or "one big union," *Anarchy* looks to more promising

and more complete forms of liberatory theory and practice: the ongoing sexual revolution; the critique of the institution of work itself, not simply how it is organized; and the critique of civilization as a totality, not only in one of its particular manifestations. Or, as a certain nineteenth-century German philosopher put it, the ruthless criticism of all that exists. Next time you play (or cook) with Marx, season him with some Nietzsche or Stirner and add a dash of Fourier.

Public Secrets

In defense of the *Joy of Revolution* on the review of *Public Secrets: The Collected Skirmishes of Ken Knabb*.

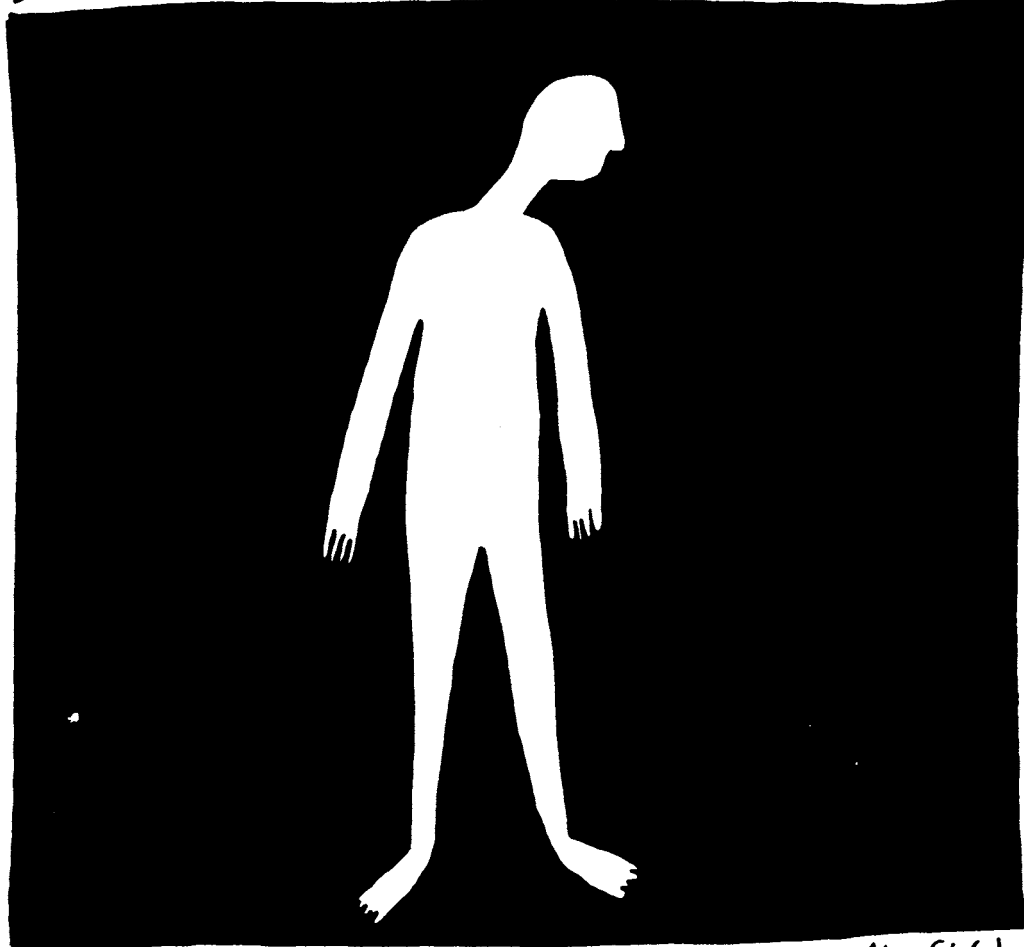
When it comes to our lovely modern society, I am what you might call an "uncooperative character," lazy-subversive, more petty-criminal syndicalist

than anarcho-syndicalist. I'm willing to bet people in the Paleolithic and before had it made compared to us. So proposals for social revolution based optimistically on the inheritance of modern material development tend not to enthruse me. However, Zerzan's review of Knabb's new book gave a distorted reading of his ideas on revolution, and those ideas do hold some appeal.

Zerzan states: "It really adds up to self-managed alienation, because it's worker-control of essentially the same system we now endure...the social landscape Knabb outlines would employ 'credits' instead of money, but otherwise it wouldn't be qualitatively different from what exists now." But Knabb says explicitly: "Traditional syndicalism and councilism have tended to take the existing division of labor too much for granted, as

if people's lives in a post-revolutionary society would continue to center around fixed jobs and workplaces...the ultimate goal, however, is not the self-management of existing enterprises." Concurring with Paul Goodman and others that most of the work done at present is superfluous or worse, he expects fixed work positions to fade through the obsoleting of most jobs and the reorganization of all activity. The whole money-commodity economy must be abolished—no words are minced about this—and the "work" week could be reduced to 10-15 hours a week. Most important, what does Knabb envision for uncooperative characters? They will be left alone! In short, Zerzan downplays or ignores the emphasis on qualitative transformation. This sounds quite different from the current system to me.

D o o m s d a y M a c h i n e .



Mr. fish

Although emphasizing decentralization and small-scale, informal organization, Knabb does seem to embrace a fair amount of regional and even global centralization. And he is optimistic about automation and the re-design and re-direction of computers and other modern technologies. But he envisions people keeping "a wary eye on experts until the necessary knowledge is more widely available or the technology in question is simplified or phased out" (page 66). That's pretty different from the social relations/technics nexus of *this* system. He offers ideas on how the whole technical landscape could be vastly transformed, including the phase-out of many technologies, the restoring of large areas for undisturbed wilderness, and the rapid dismantling of the automobile industry and infrastructure. That at least deserves a more probing critique.

Lastly, there's a valuable attempt to point out recurring patterns in times of revolt: how the illusion of powerlessness to oppose the system collapses; the contagiousness of liberation and its limits; how there are more possibilities but less time; examples of what must be avoided as well as what can be done. *Public Secrets* is well worth a read and it calls for more than a brush-off review.

Unru Lee
Tiller, OR

John Zerzan replies: Resolutely in the dark

It isn't that I find *Public Secrets* to be completely without merit, rather that a major frustration remains paramount: that its rather gifted author remains, over 25 years, so resolutely in the dark about the considerable deepening of analysis that has taken place. This is what accounts for a dismissive impulse on my part, which makes it difficult to engage in a longer, more accepting review of this book that crowns his achievements.

But even if my review is a rebuke in short-hand, I resist Lee's judgment that it "distorts" Knabb in any fundamental way. In fact, both Lee and Knabb provide the materi-

al for resisting this charge.

Knabb says he opposes "existing division of labor," only to embrace every manifestation (and illusion) of that division of labor. He favors work, banking, specialisms, automation—even computers! He seems to want the Internet while forgetting that it embodies the highest level of alienated existence yet devised, including mining, smelting, drudgery, toxicity, national power grids, etc., etc. Even a moment's reflection reveals the levels of coercion, artificiality, and estrangement from nature congealed in those gleaming machines!

My point is that Knabb's outlook does not represent a qualitative break with the world we now inhabit. In fact, he's not even close to the kind of vision or analysis needed, because he has no real problem with production, Progress, or work, not to mention their ultimate basis, division of labor. There can be no wholeness or re-connecting with the natural world, in my view, that does not begin with the rejection of these categories.

Betraying reality

Dear *Anarchy*,

John Zerzan blames the misery of modern existence on symbolic thought. He claims that symbols have failed us; language is a "betrayal of reality." In this case, he's correct. He betrays reality by asserting that language is essentially harmful. It's a simple mistake, and that's not so bad. We're all mistaken in one way or another. But the real source of our misery is not the *mistaken* use of symbols. We can betray reality *on purpose*. It's called "lying." The worst form of lying is called "delusion." Instead of condemning symbols, let's condemn dishonesty.

It's strange that Zerzan would use symbols to condemn the use of symbols (though I can't imagine how else to do it). It's also strange that he would condemn philosophy in a philosophical essay printed in a journal of philosophy.

He's right, though, that domestication of plants and animals is the source of our unhappiness, alienated life. Peter Lamborn Wilson once pointed

out to me that our ancestors were forced into agriculture. It is, after all, a miserable life compared to what came before it. He claimed that the big-shots of the era must have used their muscle and their weapons to force everyone else into this hideous, new lifestyle. Clearly, we were forced into cultivation, but how did it happen? My impression is that class division followed agriculture, not the other way around. This view is confirmed in Barbara Ehrenreich's new book, *Blood Rites*. Ehrenreich claims that the staple of our diet was not plants, as is commonly thought, but the meat of herd-animals. Zerzan may be right that we didn't hunt before the Upper Paleolithic, but that doesn't mean we were vegetarians. We got our meat from scavenging the kills of predator-animals and from driving herd-animals to their deaths at the bottoms of cliffs. (They say you *are* what you eat, and Homo erectus ate brains.) It's known that most herd-animals were exterminated at the end of the last ice age, around ten to twelve thousand years ago. We drove them down to the point where a change in the weather finished off most species. Perhaps we deluded ourselves into thinking there would always be more herds, no matter how greedy and wasteful we were. Whether by accident or by original sin, we faced domestication or starvation. Not really a choice, is it?

As Zerzan notes, culture boils down to mastery over nature. But is that really a bad thing? Seems to me the problem is the *rape* of nature. It's possible to respect nature even as we master it. Agriculture does not always destroy the quality of the land, as proven by the endurance of rice-cultivation in East Asia.

As to technology, we certainly know how destructive it can be, but that doesn't mean it's always bad. As Braverman (1974) points out, capitalists have directed the evolution of technology so as to facilitate their domination over labor. Factories are designed to reduce the skill required of workers, thereby reducing their status and their

paycheck. A good technology would restore skill in the workplace and power to the worker. Instead of giving up on technology, we need to develop a high-tech handicraft system.

Zerzan points to naming as a method of gaining power over something. He's absolutely right, and in naming this problem, he's gained power over it.

He warns us against measurement. "The urge to measure involves a deformed kind of knowledge that seeks control of its object, not understanding." Since every word in his essay is carefully measured, does that mean his essay is deformed? Not at all. Nothing's wrong with trying to be rational. It's his overall rational orientation, combined with his extensive knowledge, that makes his essay worth reading.

He condemns art. This puts him in the same boat with Plato. I hope he's happy.

He condemns ritual, despite the fact that every aspect of our lives, including writing, involves ritual. He condemns hierarchy, despite the fact that every organization in the world, including *Anarchy* magazine, has hierarchy.

Zerzan concludes that culture must be "erased for our redemption." The problem is that you can never go home. You can go back to the house you grew up in, but it's not home anymore. We could go back to the forests and savannas of our youth, but then we'd just be fucked-up modern people living in forests and savannas. We could stop talking to each other, but we can never return to our pristine, pre-lingual consciousness.

It seems we'll have to build a new kind of paradise.

Sincerely,
T.D., Seattle, WA
P.S. Try Zen, Zerzan, *Cultivate* original mind.

John Zerzan replies: Questionable assertions

T.D. bolsters his rejection of a critique of symbolic culture by several very questionable assertions, which he marshals in an effort to depict the inevitability of

estranged life.

Some of these points are refuted by orthodox anthropology, such as his claim that in the Paleolithic our ancestors exterminated "most herd-animals." There is simply no evidence for anything remotely close to that. He refers to "how greedy and wasteful we were," but the overwhelming picture is one of a couple of million years of stability, non-aggression and harmony with nature. Virtually no one now resists the characterization of pre-civilization as the most successful and longest-lasting adaptation to the environment in the history of the species.

T.D. manages to find, he thinks, an exception to the rule that agriculture always destroys the land. But domestication is not only ruinous to freedom and diversity, it always takes more than it gives. Sooner or later, agriculture destroys.

Rather than examine the essence or inner logic of technology, T.D. says there could be "good" technologies, such as a "high-tech handicraft system." Such a formulation is a contradiction in terms, as the basis of high-tech is the defeat of handicraft. Individual creativity or distinctiveness cannot issue from a foundation of division of labor, mastery of nature, and standardization.

"He condemns art." It is much more that I condemn a social existence whose division and estrangement requires the ultimately unsatisfying consolation of the merely aesthetic. Art, like religion, arose to heal a separation from previous authenticity. The point is to restore that earlier condition. To equate this point of view with that of Plato, whose totalitarian *Republic* is the antithesis of liberation, is ridiculous.

Ritual and hierarchy are simply unavoidable, like alienation and

domination? I do not accept such an accommodation with this death-seeking order.

Bob Black's drivel

Hello,

In your editorial mission statement you claim your magazine is anti-state & anti-authoritarian, if so your inclusion of Bob Black's drivel makes it obvious that you are unaware of his having turned someone in to the police for drugs which was the cover story of the *Seattle*

Weekly within the last year. The person who Bob turned in had let him stay in his house, & after an argument, Bob resorted to narking on his host, which destroyed his life & marriage, as he is still on the run from the law. This is more despicable than the fact that Bob has nothing to do with anarchy other than to confirm myths already established in some people's mind. It would be the height of hypocrisy to continue to publish Bob's STUFF, as going to the cops to turn in "the criminal"

value to share with those interested in the anarchist milieu.

Camatte in print

Dear *Anarchy* folks,

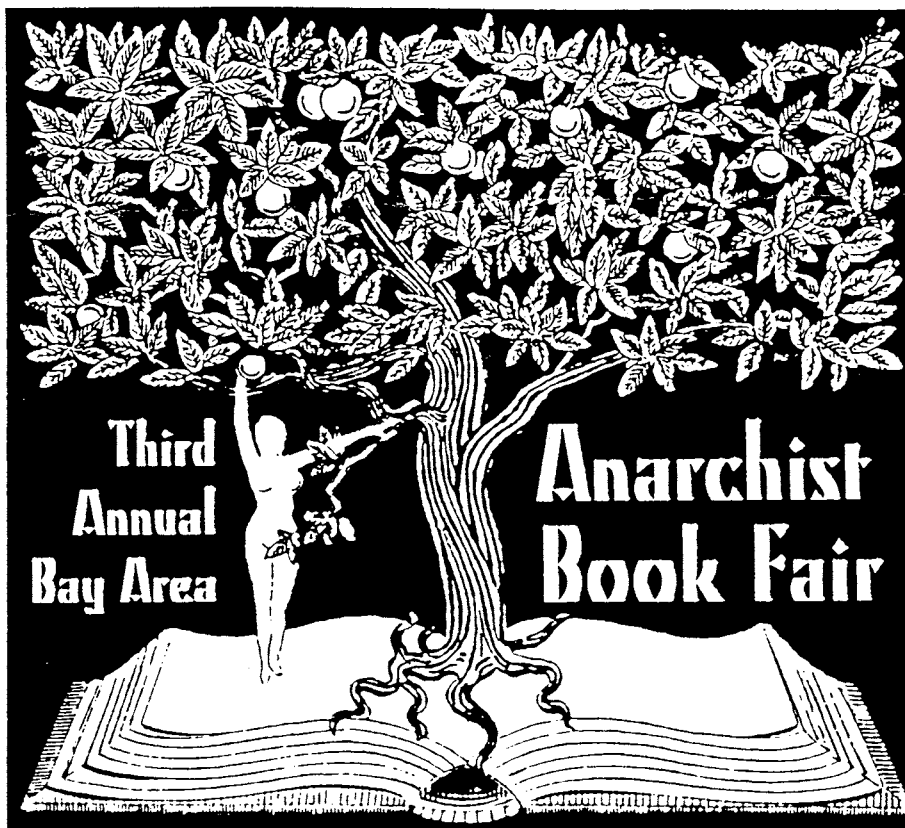
We would like to correct an inaccurate statement made by Luther Blissett, of Unpopular Books, Box 15, 136 Kingland High Road, London E8 2NS, England, in *Green Parasite*. Contrary to his assertion, the English translation of "The Origin and Function of the Party Form, Postface 1974," by

violates your mission statement.

Have fun,
B.F., Seattle, WA.

Jason responds: Bad behavior, Good writing

Thanks for your concern about the *Anarchy* mission statement *vis à vis* Bob Black's rather well-crafted, highly intelligent "drivel" and his despicable choice to become a police snitch. *Anarchy* publishes the best contemporary and historical writing available. However, this does not mean that *Anarchy* vets its writers for political coherence or adherence to any particular social mores. Just because you are able to read some effective, witty, critical prose in this magazine, does not mean that its author is a nice guy or even someone you'd ever want speak to in person. It just means that s/he is a fairly good writer with something important to say which fits within the editorial purpose of this magazine. The fact that Bob Black admittedly wrote a snitch letter to the Seattle police (after being, by all accounts, thrown out of an apartment in the middle of the night at rifle-point) is inexcusable. However, it does not in itself change the fact that he is a brilliant writer with plenty of



Anarchist Book Fair

Saturday, March 14, 1998 at the San Francisco County Fair Building at 9th Avenue & Lincoln Way in Golden Gate Park from 10 AM to 6 PM.

Admission is free. Approximately 50 anarchist groups and alternative book, magazine & publishing groups will be represented at tables selling and distributing materials and examples of their work. The plans for the day also include a cafe & bar, spoken word performances, and gallery. For more information write: The Book Fair, c/o Bound Together Books, 1369 Haight St., San Francisco, CA 94117.

Jacques Camatte and Gianni Collu, was not done by Charlatan Stew. It was done by David Brown, and he gave us the mimeo stencils, when we met him in London, England, at his home at the end of the 1970s. We used these stencils to run off copies of David Brown's translation, and circulated them here in the U.S. at the beginning of the 1980s. We were interested in familiarizing anti-authoritarians here with an aspect of Camatte's ideas which most non-French readers had little or no access to at the time.

We also want to make it clear that we do not have any agreement with Blissett's assertion in *Green Parasite* that "Like the flea, Bakuninism is a parasite that lives on the blood of real social movements." We strongly disagree with this over-generalized and totally negative characterization of the socially oriented libertarian movement.

We believe that there are both positive and negative elements in both the anarchist and Marxist traditions of the last two centuries. Rather than being unthinking adherents of any individual, group, or tendency, all of us who sincerely desire a better and more social world need to investigate, discuss, and pick and choose what we will reject, and what we build our current efforts upon. Knowledge about this history is not widespread, and it is important for interested folks to learn more, because without it, it is difficult for people to fully understand what social movements and social possibilities existed in the past, and how the ideological spokesmen for the elites of the capitalist classes of the various nation-states, and the apologists for the megamachine and civilization have distorted the history of the period to suit their own ends of domination.

While we are not interested in spending our time and energy on the details of the ongoing sectarian debates, we have believed for a long time that anti-authoritarians need to have a fuller understanding of the events, activities, and discussions that have shaped the development of the ideas and

groupings of today, in order to make informed, thoughtful evaluations of how to go forward. This is why we circulated David Brown's translation of Camatte's piece.

And, with the same goals in mind, in the early 1990s when we learned that some people involved with Autonomedia were preparing a collection of Camatte's texts, we were pleased to help them as much as we could, given some other previous commitments. Our help mainly consisted of passing on copies of translations which we had on hand. Most of these were not done by us.

By the beginning of the 1992, the majority of Camatte's writings which had previously been translated into English were no longer easily available, or even known to many people who became involved in radical activities since the beginning of the 1980s in the U.S. And we thought that whether or not new translations were made, it was a fine idea to make some of Camatte's pieces available in one, two, or three in-print publications, which people would know about, and which they could get easily.

Certainly some new translations, and particularly other texts written by Camatte and other people could be relevant to enlarging readers' understanding of the issues he discusses, and how the Invariance group was conceived and developed. But the collection put out by Autonomedia is a very good beginning, and can be augmented by anyone who wants to produce additional translations, or more explanatory historical commentary, elaborations, or criticisms in English.

Yours for a new world,

Charlatan Stew
POB 17138
Seattle, WA 98107

How I went straight

April 28, 1997: I was driven in a van from the prison to the visitor reception center. There was no dramatic walk through the gate, no picking up the envelope from a barred window. Processing out was a boring, humiliating waiting game, sign-

ing papers, a last strip search. But finally I made it to my ride. Upon stepping out of the van I felt anxious, strange. For the first time in nearly sixteen years I was outside the prison with no chains, no hefty guards to watch me, and I could just walk away. Lawrence was there, smiling, acting like it was just another day. He couldn't believe it either. It took all my effort to actually move. Like some stupid robot, I picked up a box of my property and walked towards the car, unsure of where it was parked, unable to do anything but walk in the direction instructed. Once in the car, driving away, I looked back briefly, once, and could not control the feelings that built inside me. I sat in that car, marvelling at the emotions I hadn't planned on, and tears flowed down my face. There were no words, we sat in silence almost the whole way to the home arrest office in downtown Tucson, where we met Tony Reis, my parole officer (or, as is now the term, my "community supervisor").

Lawrence parked, I was totally lost, unable to determine directions, amazed at the amount of people just wandering around. I took a really deep breath, checked for my I.D. card pinned to my shirt that I no longer had to wear, and felt my heart jump just a bit as I realized I no longer had that I.D. Lawrence bought me a drink at a sandwich shop. So many choices there—I forced myself to get a bottle cranberry juice; it was very hard to choose.

At the parole office Reis laid his speech on me, and connected me up to the monitoring device by attaching a pager-sized transmitter to my ankle. It immediately felt like the old, well-known chains. And though its not metal, and can be cut off easily, its as effective as any chains for someone trying to go straight. I was told I would be allowed to leave my residence between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., and had to be there at all other times. I was told I could not work the first week or two, could not attend religious functions, couldn't possess a weapon (pocket knife

O.K.), couldn't drink, couldn't, couldn't, couldn't, could not do anything but show up for appointments with the parole office, and wander around doing shopping during whatever time I had left over. Initially, it appeared worse than prison. But upon getting home and doing a bit of shopping...well, let's talk about shopping.

Lawrence took me to this place, The Food Conspiracy, a food co-op in a quaint part of downtown Tucson. Its a rather small store compared to any supermarket, but for me it was huge. Shelves filled with products, colors, containers, choices, abundant selections. I felt the shock hit me the instant I walked in. Being the jail-faced individual I am, no one could see I was going loony. Lawrence whizzed through the store, choosing this and that as if by magic he knew the contents, prices. He stopped at the fruit spread shelves and I froze—bottles of colors filled my vision. I knew inside those little bottles were flavors and textures I wanted as much as I'd ever wanted anything. Lawrence told be to choose one. Choose one? I was instantly overwhelmed with the thought of having a choice to make, out of the many selections before me. I stared at that shelf and froze, literally. My mind went into overdrive, reading every label, every fruit, labeling the prices in some irretrievable brain file I'd never remember. Lawrence urged me to make a choice, that we didn't have a lot of time. I turned away and began laughing uncontrollably. Choose one? What? Was he insane? Lawrence picked two or three and we were on our way. After getting a few more items we stepped out of the store. I checked for my I.D. card with a quick pat to my chest, it wasn't there so I went through a moment of panic. I looked both ways before going out the door, checking to make sure the yard was open and others were moving about. We went to some thrift shops and picked up some 'civilian' clothes real cheap. Then Lawrence took me home.

Since then, life for me has been a series of overwhelming

Letters

sensory overload experiences, from simple shopping to learning streets and actually being able to move more than a few feet at a time in my house—and finally, this past week—a woman. It still is beyond my ability to fully explain the sensations and experience. Mind-boggling, a the least. Money is very tight and I'm learning to budget and such. Many screwed up things happened shortly after I got out. First, I had a job set up, approved etc., to work for Attorney David Braun. Four days after I got out and went to a parole office appointment, I was informed I would not be able to work for an attorney. So I appealed the decision and went out in search of a job. Got on food stamps, medical through the V.A., obtained a driver's license and found out from

social security that I'm not listed as a bonafide U.S. citizen. I railed at them, telling how I could not have been what I was in the military (yes, they knew, it was on their computer screen), without having a top secret clearance—and they wouldn't give that particular one to a non-citizen (at the time). No use, box not checked, Avi not citizen. Yeah yeah...Fun part of it is that no one around here will give me (or anyone) a job without a valid SS card. How times have changed. I got on the phone to the State Dept., and lucked out with a man who gave me another number (that, he said, was not supposed to be handed out so don't tell anyone where I got it....), which put in contact with another dept. (that indeed was the right one and will surprises

never cease?), who faxed (yes, I had something faxed to me!) me a form that I filled out, enclosed the required ten semolians, and sent it post haste (for another ten smackers), to the appropriate governmental agency at its perfectly located address. Within ten days I received an obviously IMPORTANT manila envelope from the U.S. Department of State, Madeline Albright's Office, that had therein enclosed a marvelous official looking document with stamp, seal, on special government non-reproducible paper of high quality charged to the tax payers on a regular basis, signed personally by my good friend and secretary of state Madeline Albright, that stated that I, yes I, Arnold or Avi Naftel, was born a bonafide and god-fearing, flag swearing,

person of importance in that I am a United States Citizen. Hurrah. Taking my status as stated in hand, I pulled out my trusty steed and pedalled the 5-6 miles to the social security office, and presented there my proof of citizenship. They hemmed and hawed and looked it over—what a fine document it was, no one had actually seen one before and supervisors had to be checked with. Routinely, having that common bureaucratic ailment: reverse cranial rectal plug; they had to pull their heads out of their asses and come talk to me, implying that although I was very good, they did not believe the document. I said, dial this number, handing them my secret that I'm not supposed to tell about. They dialed and faces of awe struck them as the high of highs, the State Department in its pomp and glory—not some ambassador or legate, nay, the very heart of the State itself, answered and verified that they had issued that very same document, identified by the numerical code and other such government/mason signs on the high quality paper. I at once became MR. NAFTEL, SIR, sorry we fucked up, here's your form, fill it out, card will be mailed in a few days. I got the card. Took about 4 weeks for the whole affair. Not too bad, considering.

Did I say I've been overwhelmed?

I finally got a job at an upholstery shop where I like the work and the workplace. I moved out of the house into a studio (one room) apartment which more suits me at this time and is less rent. Somehow I managed to get financed and bought a 1994 Ford Escort GL, a very nice vehicle—I have no idea how I'll pay for it.... But I'm now a respectable citizen, kept my pact with the parole office, did all those things one is supposed to do.

Monday, August 18, 1997: The Parole Board voted to deny my request to be removed from home arrest to be placed on general parole. They denied every parole request and release that day. They told me I need "further supervision." They may

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Sidewalk Bubblegum ©1994 Clay Butler

be right: any more supervision and I might have to run for office. The worst part of the hearing is that I had to go back into the prison to appear. It was a most stressing situation. I had fear that it was a trap, that I wouldn't come back out. But I put on a decent suit (nuts in the Arizona heat), toted my ballistic nylon briefcase into the room, and sat straight while I was treated like a leach. As I walked out the gate for the second time it was like being reborn again. I got into the car and drove away. I'll never go back in again, not for any reason. Funny thing though, I still check for the I.D. on my shirt front....

Avi Naftel
3450 N. Stone Ave. #221
Tucson, AZ 85705

"Unstated" sources

To the Editor:

Congratulations to Professor Ward Churchill on his *honorary* degree. Joanie Caucus of "Doonesbury" has one too, so Churchill is the second cartoon character to receive one.

Churchill has a weird way of refuting his critics. Instead of disputing my facts, he says my sources are "unstated"—just like his, as a letter to the editor is not the right format for supplying extensive documentation. But in my case, unlike his, the references to exist. I welcome queries at my address (below) and I am sure Professor Churchill welcomes them too at his address [in] Boulder, CO. Directory Assistance confirms the address—from which he used to write to me several years ago—although Churchill claims not to have resided in Boulder's "confines" since.

The "unstated" source of my statement that there are about 2 million Indians in the United States is, of course, just what, one sentence later, he says it is: the 1990 U.S. census data. To be precise, the Indian/Eskimo/Aleut population was then 1,959,234. Since census ethnic identification is based on self-reports not independently verified, the Indian population is overestimated by at least one—Ward Churchill, characterized by Chippewa artist David

Bradley as "a white man, posing as an Indian" (Colorado *Daily*, Nov. 23, 1993, p.3). The "unstated" source for my saying Churchill's national socialist AIM organization's membership is 5,000 in the *Reference Encyclopedia of the American Indian* (5th ed. 1990) which attributes the statistic to AIM itself. Churchill doesn't say it's wrong. Thus AIM claims as members one quarter of one percent of the Native American population. And if guys like Churchill and his fellow hustler Russell Means are typical of AIM, I wouldn't place any credence in AIM membership claims.

As Churchill has wasted considerable space in the pages of this anarchist magazine on quibbles, although he is no anarchist himself, let me set a better example by focusing on a point

of central interest to anarchists: whether Churchill's indigenism is statist or not. I first refer the reader to the map on p. 430 of Churchill's *Struggle for the Land*, which proposes the partition of the lower 48 states between an Indian state (one-third of the land area is Churchill's estimate) and a rump state for non-Indians. "I herewith challenge him," writes Churchill, "to offer one single direct quote from the essay into evidence to support this assertion," viz., my assertion he advocates "the establishment of an American Indian 'State' in what is now the western U.S." Gladly! In the above-referenced book, Churchill generously allows that the Indian inheritors of this Western empire might be amenable to something less than full independence from the United States, but not him: "My

own inclination, which is in some ways an emotional preference, tends to run toward complete sovereign independence" (p.432). Such an "indigenous union," he says, would be eligible for membership in the United Nations (p.431), where only sovereign states are eligible for membership.

What remains is to assay the consequences of implementing Churchill's grotesque separatist fantasy. After poring over the 1990 census figures, I estimate that over 22 million people live in his proposed Indigenous Union, of whom less than 650,000 are Indians. About two-thirds of American Indians live outside its boundaries, and I suspect that most of them have no interest in relocating to Churchill's empire, especially as this would involve giving up, not



only the not inconsiderable lands they still hold, but also a lot of legal privileges uniquely enjoyed by Indians, to move to a mountainous/desert area unlike the environment they're used to.

It is obviously demographically impossible for the overwhelming majority of the whites, browns and blacks now residing in Aztlan to remain there if the indigenous Union is to be indigenous in anything but name. Churchill says (p.433) he has "no idea how many non-Indians might opt for citizenship in an Indian nation when push comes to shove, but I expect there will be some." If "some" is, say even 2% or 3%, they will form the majority and, if this new nation is a democracy, they will promptly apply for readmission to the United States where they do not have to prove they are Indians to enjoy political and civil rights. Or is Aztlan not a democracy but rather a racial-caste oligarchy? Whatever this sick fantasy is, it's *not* anarchy.

Bob Black
POB 3142
Albany, NY 12203-0142

Neoist smears

Dear Mr. McQuinn,

Anyone familiar with *Green Anarchist* or the work of UK's leading anti-fascist researcher Larry O'Hara would find Fabian "Fuckwit" Tompsett of the Neoist Alliance's description of us as "Nazis without swastikas" (*Anarchy* #42, pp.78-79) bizarre beyond belief. Larry if foremost in arguing fascism has developed sophisticated forms beyond National Socialism, so it is insulting for Fuckwit to appropriate such analysis and pretend Larry's the ignorant one here!

Tad Kepley found himself asking "what the hell is going on in Britain, anyway?" (*Anarchy* #41, p.81) after being deluged by letters from obvious

neo-nationalist groups in UK that *Green Anarchist* had identified as such in the previous issue (*Anarchy* #40, P.90). What sort of "fascists" would warn your readers not to supply their names and addresses to such

tionary views had become intolerable to us and *GA* #36's editorial exposed Hunt's subsequent role in Trans-Europa along with Lawson's. Not content with this smear, Home and Fuckwit went on to produce

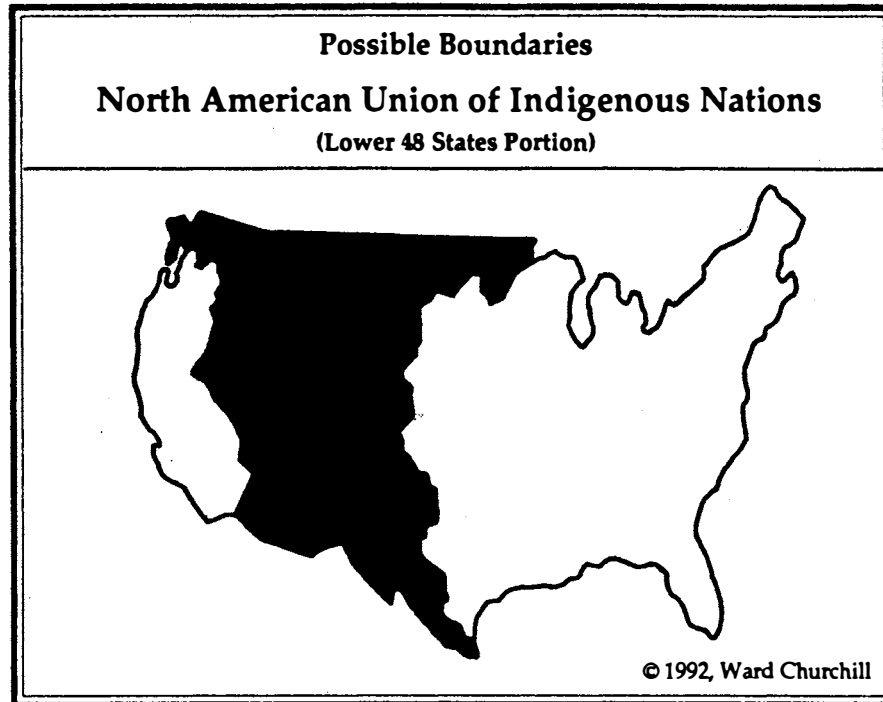
punks together in the late 1970s (Home's claim to the "utopian tradition"). Wakeford was in Iona before he was in Trans-Europa and fronting for black-shirted Death in Jung singing odes to the SS like "We Drive East" before he moved on to Odinism and Sol Invictus. Despite claims to have broken with Wakeford during the 1980s, Home has sympathetically reviewed him throughout this period, describing Wakeford as a "genius" and "knight of the faith." This latter is a clear reference to Julius Evola's concept of the "political soldier" and Home is crass enough to even use Evolian fascist slogans in print (e.g. "Long Live Death" in his *What is Situationism? A Reader*—AK Press, 1996). Fuckwit has backed Home and his Holocaust-denying buddy Wakeford to the hilt, not least because he was in La Guerre Sociale, who backed

Robert Faurisson, convicted in France for denying there were gas chambers in the concentration camps. Fuckwit only admitted this *last* year (see *Sucked*, p.2) and only because Michel Prigent forced him to.

Anarchy has been sent a great deal of "solid evidence" to back up what we have said here—and will be sent more—whereas we suspect Fuckwit's "special report" was accompanied by none at all. It should be obvious that Home and Fuckwit can't even *believe* their own incredible accusations—let alone substantiate them—and that the only reason they made them in the first place was at the behest of Trans-Europa, making them a lot more. "cheak by jowl with apostles of the far Right" than any of the anarchists in UK they've been accusing of that have ever been.

Yours, for the destruction of Civilisation,

Oxford Green Anarchists
BCM 1715
London, WC1N 3XX



groups?

The only ones to deny their "chauvinistic nationalism" (if not "more complex notion[s] of overlapping circles of social and cultural identity"—*Anarchy* #41, p.72) were the Trans-Europa Collective, successor to the infamous Iona Collective and run by Richard Lawson, ideological architect of the National Party in the 1970s. Thanks to exposés in *Green Anarchist* #36's editorial and *Look-Out* #1, people in UK are now wise to Trans-Europa. Its journal, *Perspectives*, has folded and its successor, *Radical Shift*, hasn't made it past its first issue.

Rather than commending *Green Anarchist* for this exposé, Neoist Stewart "Truth Is The Enemy" Home wrote in "Organized Chaos," a 25th October 1994 *Independent* article slugging the *Anarchy* In The UK festival, that *Alternative Green's* editor Richard Hunt was still involved with *Green Anarchist*. The truth is that Hunt left *GA's* editorial group in 1991 because his reac-

such black propaganda as *Green & Brown Anarchist* (in which *GA* "confesses" to a policy of Green death camps to reduce world population by 75%—our views on population are actually in line with those expressed by *New Internationalist* and appended to George Bradford's *How Deep Is Deep Ecology?*), *Green Apocalypse* (which ineptly argues we are fascists because we're anarchists) and *Militias: Rooted in White Supremacy* (which ridiculously claims not just *GA* but everyone from Class War to *Black Flag's* Stuart Christie are "fascistic" or "cheak [sic] by jowl with apostles of the far right"). When confronted about this at the Oval last year, Fuckwit couldn't even give a simple definition of fascism, despite continually calling us fascists for the last two years—so you see why people call him that!

The Neoists are throwing these smears because Home has been best buddies with Tony Wakeford since they were

Boycott Black & Bookchin

Dear *Anarchy*,

We have had enough of Bob Black. Publish his temper tantrums no more. Or, do so at your own peril. History, language, the multiverse, wild nature and desire. We are no longer interested in being spectators to a thumb war between an arrogant lawyer and a curmudgeon professor. Anarchists don't need judges. Bob Black: "to do justice to the Dean...do I ever want to do *exactly* that!" To serve justice, to be in a position of authority and power. Imagine....

We call for an immediate boycott of all publications by Bob Black and Murray Bookchin. This boycott will be lifted only when Bob Black guarantees free legal counsel to anarchists who need it, and when Murray Bookchin offers full tuition wavers to anyone who wishes to attend Goddard College. If these demands cannot be met, then we suggest both men seriously reconsider their ability to participate in the construction of an anarchist society.

This is not a joke.

Ad Hoc
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada

Revolutionary charade

Dear *Anarchy*,

Good to see you back in print. I have not seen an issue for over a year now. Everybody seems to be getting older and the younger "Peace Punk" generation seem to be into their own subcultural bag.

Regarding Bob Black and Ward Churchill. I met Ward at the Black Hills Alliance organizing meeting in Boulder and rode up with him and some young Navajo women to the

gatherings in 1979 in the Black Hills. They seemed more interested in going to Tourist Sites "Crazy Horse Monument" and "Mt. Rushmore," than the conference. I went as the sole representative of "Rock Against

couple of times in San Francisco before he was chased out of town after the Processed World debacle, has always been a drunken gadfly, anarcho-nihilist, who became a self-indulgent narcissistic nihilist verging upon

In any case, I only trash personal acquaintances and only for the best reasons. On with the revolutionary charade, oops, I meant Parade!

Your Comrade without mechanical death dispensing arms—

Gary Rumor
Venice, CA

PS: Let's put the "Red" back into the "Black and Red," enough Right Wing bandwagoning.

Postmodern "anarchist"

I've been getting increasingly annoyed by the word-salad posturing of Bey and find "Primitives & Extropians" [see *Anarchy* #42] one of the weaker offerings yet from this postmodern liberal. I will confine myself to some of the stand-out dopiness from what is shot through with inaccuracies, evasions, pontificating, ego-stroking, and shallowness.

On the level of content "P's & E's" is little short of absurd. He pitches his piece, most basically, as a comparison of two viewpoints, "two anarchist tendencies." But how even the most air-headed could make the extreme technofascist imperialism of extropy into an "anarchist" tendency is quite beyond me. In fact, it worships every hideous high-tech manifestation of the total mastery of nature

and the obliteration of every trace of the sensual, autonomous individual. To quote from one of its priests, Carnegie-Mellon's Hans Moravec, "The final frontier will be urbanized, ultimately into an arena where every bit of activity is a meaningful computation: the inhabited portion of the universe will be transformed into a cyberspace...We might then be

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Racism." Ward seemed like a reasonable Native American academic, not particularly direct action oriented or inspired. But he knew the old AIM crew when they were still suffering from the post-Wounded Knee crackdown and his attitude seemed to be one of cynical post-resistance trauma.

Bob Black on the other hand, someone who I have met a

becoming a terroristic self-aggrandizing thug; but sorry no vigor, he has remetabolized as an elder statesman joining the bandwagon of nitpicking illiterati after that poor old tottering, soon to be senile, mega-elder Murray Bookchin, whom I have only met once, at a Modern Times leftist literary fest in San Francisco. He seemed harmless enough to me.

tempted to replace some of our innermost mental processes with more cyberspace-appropriate programs purchased from Artificial Intelligence, and so, bit by bit, transform ourselves into something much like them. Ultimately our thinking procedures could be totally liberated from any traces of our original body, indeed of any body." (*Extropy*, #10, 1993). To term something so viciously evil "anarchist" suggests stupidity compounded by bad faith.

Bey's method is as appalling

as his claims to truthfulness, and essentially conforms to textbook postmodernism. Aestheticism plus knownothingism is the pm formula; cynical as to the possibility of meaning, allergic to analysis, hooked on trendy word-play, "Primitivists & Extropians" displays these features exquisitely.

A point of view that tries to be a consistent, well-researched, tentative exploration is deemed absolutist, rigid, aggressive, the product of a "presumptive vanguard of the pure." Bey, howev-

er, is inconsistent, messy, open, impure, non-exclusive, etc. He elevates diversity, the multiplicity of situations, the refusal of the world to conform to simple formulations. What is galling is how stark and even nightmarish our situation really is, hip verbiage aside. Frederic Jameson put it ably in his *Seeds of Time* (1994): "How is it possible for the most standardized and uniform social reality in history, by the merest ideological flick of the thumbnail...to reemerge as the rich oil-smear sheen of

absolute diversity and of the unimaginable and unclassifiable forms of human freedom?"

Bey completely buys into the pm illusion that society is too "complex" to yield to any profound indictment. A further unveiling of our trendy author reveals a liberal, whose "utopian" future might well include, he discloses, "wrangling about 'acceptable emission standards' or forest preservation." Further, "the human (animal/animate) scaling of economy and technology—this, however untidy, I would call utopia." How basically reformist! It is little wonder that Bey opens this whole mess of an article by declaring that "the anarcho-primitivists have backed themselves into a situation where they can never be satisfied without the total dissolution of the totality."

A bohemian liberal like Bey has really no quarrel with the totality, whereas I foolishly have thought that the threshold definition of a radical, of one who yearns for a qualitative break with the whole deranged setup, is precisely dissatisfaction with the totality.

More than half of this pathetic exercise is Bey peddling his patented Temporary Autonomous Zone prescription. The TAZ "seems to be the only manifestation of the possibility of radical conviviality," is bigger than "mere ideas," is able to "reconcile the wilderness and cyberspace...in fact, has already done so." Reads to me like it is Bey who advances his candidacy for Absolute Rightness, not those who seek, in an anti-ideological and visionary spirit, to learn from our origins and identify the basics, in reality, of our deep imprisonment. Liberatory analysis and practice have, I would say, far better chances for success from clear thinking and unlimited desire than from stylistic mantras about the glories of inconsistency and hip-sounding, three-word solutions in capital letters.

John Zerzan
Eugene, OR

PS: Thanks to John Filiss for the considerable *Extropy* literature he provided me.

CHRISTIAN ANGST

That's right, Sweetheart...
Without the benefit of
religion, we'd actually be
stuck having to *think for
ourselves!*



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Social Anarchism revisited

Continued from page 59

it may be a nightmare. The idea that the individual has no right autonomous of the collective is reactionary. (Look at how many ideas meant to free people have turned into canon for reactionaries, fascists, and totalitarians.) Bookchin acknowledges that individuals are self-motivated but writes that "left to his or her own self, the individual loses the indispensable social moorings that make for what an anarchist might be expected to prize in individuality: reflective powers, which derive in great part from discourse; the emotional equipment that nourishes rage against unfreedom; the sociality that motivates the desire for radical change; and the sense of responsibility that engenders social action." Bookchin is disturbed by the implication that "if individual 'autonomy' overrides any commitment to a 'collectivity,' there is no basis whatever for social institutionalization, decision making or even administrative coordination." (Bookchin never makes a convincing argument for social institutionalization—one should assume that administrative coordination is necessary. The extent to which it is necessary, if it is necessary at all, is not discussed, although we should understand that the anarchist would say "minimal" or "as necessary." What coordination is necessary largely depends on how society, production, and consumption are organized.) He fears the lone sovereign ego who would abort the decision of the majority. Of course sovereign egos not bound by coercion or property would ostensibly leave the company of any groups whose decision they did not agree with. Why should a sovereign ego be forced to act in coordination with the majority, unless that majority outlawed private property or action—in essence, forced collectivization? Democracy is the only form of organization for Bookchin, meaning all arguments would be heard but a majority decision would prevail. (We can see how Bookchin's democracy works in practice

when we remember the rational and fair treatment of our "child molester.") Bookchin fears consensus means that decision making will be "manipulated" by a minority, (manipulation being the buzzword of every powered group that has to deal with dissent). This may represent an inherent distrust of minorities or a conformist tendency in Bookchin. If a person with a dissenting opinion has a commitment to social compromise, he or she may in fact accept a majority decision. Democracy, however, ensures that a minority decision never need be adopted. Does Bookchin suggest that minorities are always wrong and that the majority (given the right social education) will always make the right decision and act in good faith toward minorities? (What a leap in faith!) No, but he does suggest that democracy is the ideal form of society and that we can think of nothing better. Should we believe that such a wonderful, fair, just society would be disrupted by malicious egoists who just want to exercise power? (Most manipulation of the democratic framework is carried out by keeping the interests of the majorities and minorities at odds with each other. In any collective, once de facto groups are formed, individual members of majorities can manipulate other members who see themselves as allies because people have already tended to think in groups, not as a whole.) Yes, we can imagine (or know) such people, but if Bookchin asks us to make such leaps of faith to believe that society can be transformed from a conformist, manipulated, superstitious, authoritarian force into a free association of individuals, then we might as well ask him to believe that the individual expression of one's reaction to authority that manifests itself in the will to control and to undermine another's volition will also disappear when that other is valued, not oppressed. What conclusions can we make from Bookchin's lack of faith? That he feels there will always be a few "bad seeds"? To say that democracy "works" (in its idealized form), does depend on who is exercising it and in what fashion.

So MB would have us believe that "lifestyle anarchists" would disrupt democracy for no

reason, or are leading people away from democracy and advocating elitism or total chaos (although some, in fact, are). Even if this were overwhelmingly true, this is no real impediment to democracy. The biggest impediment to democracy is the lack of its use to create cooperative, non-exploitative projects and the long history of its use for controlling and ignoring minorities. (And although Bookchin might shout that this wasn't real democracy, he's wrong because democracy mainly refers to a system of decision making, not of free association, cooperation, or living without prejudice, hatred, and violence.) Let the Bookchinites create harmonious, cooperative, democratic communities around the world. It isn't lifestyle anarchism that's stopping them.

Bookchin goes on to critique TAZ and of course there's plenty to pick apart in that book. "Why confront a 'power' which has lost all meaning?..." Bey writes. Bookchin responds, "If what is happening in Bosnia with firepower is a mere 'simulation,' we are living in a very safe world indeed." Bookchin could cut the Bey some slack, but the old man is fighting for his seat as leading theoretician. He isn't beyond pot shots—to compare Bey's idealistic "L'etat, C'est Moi" with Stalin and Hitler; one shouldn't suppose that such prerogatives are altogether impossible for Bey's petit-bourgeois audience. When all reason fails—sling mud!

It is true that those in power have little to fear from autonomous zones. In a world of political coexistence, exploitation can always exist where they have a certain amount of social and economic control. And way before they'll let a good amount of people practice their "inviolable freedom" (which I should assume includes the right to live free off the land without engaging in financial transactions), they can just stick everybody in a jail where they can test their capabilities to dream their freedom.

All in all, my review of the great chasm is probably far more interesting than the book itself. It's great source material for sectarians, heretics, and people who want to trash someone, but Bookchin supplies no great ideas—you all have to come up with those yourself.



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C.A.L. Press Books

Anarchy after Leftism

Bob Black's newest book fresh off the press. An intelligent, witty & compelling demolition job on both Murray Bookchin's atrocious *Social Anarchism vs. Lifestyle Anarchism* and his overall philosophical and radical pretensions. (C.A.L. Press, 1997) 176pp. **\$7.95** paper.

Future Primitive & Other Essays

John Zerzan's latest book collecting important recent essays from *Anarchy & Demolition Derby*, including "Future Primitive," "The Mass Psychology of Misery," "The Catastrophe of Postmodernism" and "Tonality and the Totality." (C.A.L. Press & Autonomedia, 1994) 185pp. **\$6.95** paper.

Revolution of Everyday Life

Raoul Vaneigem's still-explosive masterpiece on radical subjectivity in a world of things and their prices. This book is being serialized in each issue *Anarchy*, but it's well worth reading & re-reading. One of the two major works of the Situationist International, this book played a role in the gestation of the general strike of May, 1968 in France. (Left Bank & Rebel Press, 1967, 1994) 279pp. **\$15.95** paper.

Against His-Story, Against Leviathan

Fredy Perlman's most important work presents his account of the world history of civilizations from their origins as they devoured primitive peoples and other civilizations on their way to the dead-end we know too well as the present day. A poetic and deeply subversive reversal of perspective on history. (Black & Red, 1983) 302pp. **\$6.95** paper.

Letters of Insurgents

Fredy Perlman's (under the pseudonyms of Sophia Nachalo & Yarostan Vocheh) fascinating & compelling novel of letters between continents revealing and concealing what is subversive and what is recuperated in the personal & public lives of two radicals—one American and one in Eastern Europe—from the upheavals of the '60s through the reaction which followed. (Black & Red, 1976) 831pp. **\$12.95** paper.

The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism

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History of the Makhnovist Movement

Peter Arshinov's inspiring firsthand account the most important anarchist movement of the Russian Revolution centered on the anarchist partisans organized by Nestor Makhno in the Ukraine, as they fought for their lives under attack from the Ukrainian nationalists, the Bolshevik counter-revolution and the Czarist White armies from 1918 until their defeat in 1921. (Black & Red, 1987) 284pp. **\$7.95** paper.

Society of the Spectacle

Guy Debord's highly important masterwork updating Marx's theory of commodity fetishism for an electronically-mediated world. "Everything which was once lived has moved into its representation." One of the two central works of the Situationist International. (Black & Red, 1967, 1983) unpaginated **\$4.95** paper.

Situationist International Anthology

Ken Knabb's definitive translation and collection of the most important articles from the S.I.'s French journal, including those by Asger Jorn, Ivan Chtcheglov, Guy Debord, Raoul Vaneigem, Attila Kótányi, René Viénet & others. (Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981) 406pp. **\$14.95** paper.

I, Claudia

This is a compilation of Claudia's two excellent pamphlets, *I, Claudia: Feminism Unveiled* and *Love Lies Bleeding* in book form, focusing on a radically individualist critique of feminism. Powerful, enjoyable writing. (Claudia Press, 1993) 61pp. **\$3.95** paper.

Drawing the Line

Paul Goodman's most important political essays collected by Taylor Stoehr. Possibly the best known of contemporary American anarchists in the 1960s, and justly so, Goodman applied his brilliant mind to a variety of subjects from his poetry, stories & novels to Gestalt therapy, from education to city planning, from philosophy to social criticism. (Free Life Editions, 1977) 272pp. **\$8.95** hardcover (Dutton, 1979) **\$6.95** paper.

Begin at Start

Su Negrin's simple, straightforward & unpretentious primer for integrating the personal and the political, written from a 1960s-70s perspective. (Times Change Press, 1972) 173pp. **\$5.95** paper.

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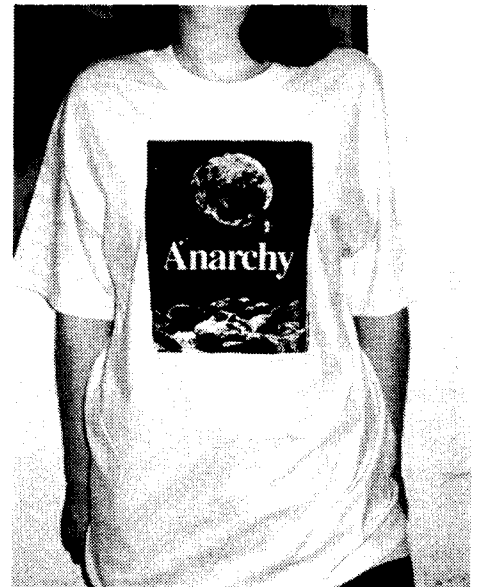
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Anarchy #10 (12pp. tabloid) [Feb.-Mar. '86] Contents include the first installment of "The Papalagi."

Anarchy #11 (12pp. tabloid) [April '86] Includes Gerry Reith's story "Winning Hearts and Minds."

Anarchy #12 (12pp. tabloid) [Summer '86] Includes "Notes on Playing for Keeps" by Alf Sprack.

Anarchy #13 [Weekly World Anarchy issue] (20pp. tabloid) [Fall-Winter '86] Includes Murray Bookchin's "Theses on Libertarian Municipalism."

Anarchy #14 (28pp. tabloid) [Summer '87] Includes John Zerzan's "Vagaries of Negation," & "Intervention in Vietnam and Central America" by Noam Chomsky.

Anarchy #15 (32pp. tabloid) [Winter '88] Includes "The Realization & Suppression of Religion" by Ken Knabb & "Anarchy & Religion; A Dialogue."

Anarchy #16 (32pp. tabloid) [Summer '88] Includes Holly's "My life in the Porn Biz," Paula Webster's "Pornography and Pleasure" & more "Anarchy & Religion."

Anarchy #17 (32pp. tabloid mag.) [Fall-Winter '88-89] Includes "Who Killed Ned Ludd?" by John Zerzan & "The Freedom of Biocentrism" by Lone Wolf Circles.

Anarchy #18 (32pp. tabloid mag.) [March-April '89] Includes "Bigger Cages, Longer Chains" and two reactions to the Toronto gathering's "Day of Action."

Anarchy #19 (32pp. tabloid mag.) [May-July '89] Special issue on "Children's Sexuality."

Anarchy #20/21 Double issue (48pp. tabloid mag.) [Aug.-October '89] Includes Richard Walters' "Whatever Happened to the Sexual Revolution," "Jealousy" by Isaac Cronin & Kevin Keating's "The Man in the Box."

Anarchy #22 (32pp. tabloid mag.) [Nov.-Dec. '89] Includes "In Search of the New Age" by Janos Nehek.

Anarchy #23 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Jan.-Feb. '89] Includes "The Population Myth" by Murray Bookchin & Noam Chomsky's "Propaganda American-Style."

Anarchy #24 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [March-April '90] Includes "Misinformation and Manipulation: An Anarchist Critique of the Politics of AIDS" by Joe Peacock.

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Anarchy #26 (40pp. tabloid mag.) [Fall '90] Includes "Take Things from Work" by bp ummfatik & Kevin Keating's story "The Good, The Bad and The Angry."

Anarchy #27 (36pp. tabloid mag.) [Winter '90-91] Special "Free the Kids" issue.

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Anarchy #33 (88pp. magazine) [Summer '92] Special issue on "Abandoning Civilization," includes John Zerzan's "Future Primitive," Fredy Perlman's "Against History," & Ward Churchill's "Deconstructing Columbus."

Anarchy #34 (88pp., magazine) [Fall '92] Includes Nick DiSpolito's "Postcards from Prison" & Max Anger's "We All Hate the Cops."

Anarchy #35 (84pp., magazine) [Winter '93] Includes M.A. James' "The Stone Age Revisited" & Manolo Gonzalez's "Life in Revolutionary Barcelona."

Anarchy #36 (84pp., magazine) [Spring '93] Includes Michael Williams' "Bisexuality" and part 2 of Manolo Gonzalez's "Life in Revolutionary Barcelona."

Anarchy #37 (84pp., magazine) [Summer '93] Includes Freddy Perlman's "The Continuing Appeal of Nationalism" and John Zerzan's "Rank and File Radicalism in the KKK of the 1920s."

Anarchy #38 (84pp., magazine) [Fall '93] Includes "For a World without Morality" from *La Banquise* and "In the Aftermath of the Spanish Civil War: Adios, Catalonia, Pt.1" by Manolo Gonzalez.

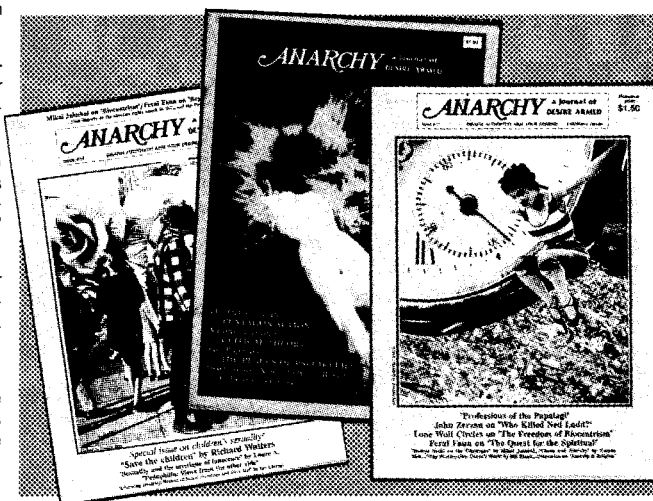
Anarchy #39 (84pp., magazine) Winter '94 Includes John Zerzan's "Time and Its Discontents," Manolo Gonzalez on "The Aftermath of the Spanish Civil War: Adios, Catalonia, Pt.2" & Neal Keating's "Rioting & Looting as a Modern Potlatch."

Anarchy #40 (100pp., magazine) Spring/Summer '94 Includes Michael Williams' "The Ecology Montreal Party: A Libertarian Frankenstein," Anders Corr's interview on "Nonmonogamy," & libertarian fiction by Lorna McLaughlin, Marc Sherman & Doug Bolling.

Anarchy #41 (84pp., magazine) Winter '95 Special issue on "Individualism," includes the Bibliothèque des Émeutes' "On Max Stirner," excerpts from For Ourselves' "The Right to Be Greedy," Doug Imrie on "The Illegalists," & Marius Jacob's "Why I Became a Burglar."

Anarchy #42 (84pp., mag.) Fall '95 Includes Hakim Bey's "Primitives & Extropians," Paul Simons' "New Model Army," Octavio Alberola on the insurrection in "Baja California" & Michel Donnegan's "Petersburg."

Anarchy #43 (64pp., magazine) Spring/Summer '97 Includes John Zerzan's "Running on Emptiness: The Failure of Symbolic Thought," Bob Black on "Murray Bookchin: Grumpy Old Man," Laure Akai's "In Search of the Unabomber," & Max Anger on "The Sparticist School of Falsification."



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